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THE
HEIRESS OF BRUGES;
A TALE

OF THE YEAR SIXTEEN HUNDRED.

BY
THOMAS COLLEY GRATTAN,

AUTHOR OF "HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS,"
"TRAITS OF TRAVEL," &c.

Alasse, alasse! what a thing Love is; why it is like to an ostry faggot,
that once set on fire, is as hardly to be quenched, as the bird crocodill driven
out of her nest.

LODGE AND GREEN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE
HEIRESS OF BRUGES.

CHAPTER I.

It was for the sixth day after Theresa's establishment in Rozenhoed House, that her father's grand installation feast was fixed, as had been justly calculated and explained by Count Ivon, in his parting conversation with Lyderic. The repast given on this occasion was, as was the custom, at the expense of the city, and took place in the banquetting rooms of the town house. Nothing could exceed the sumptuousness of the entertainment. There

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was a profusion of every thing in season and in fashion ; and dishes were filled with delicacies as foreign to our present tastes, as the crane of the ancients or the peacock of the chivalric ages were to those of the gluttonous burghers of the time we treat of.

A Flemish feast has at all times borne the same character for gormandizing, which we attribute to the corporation dinners of our own country. There is perhaps a little exaggeration in both cases, but it is more likely in the latter than in the former. Our more social habits allow to individuals the constant opportunity of convivial meetings, the infrequency of which in the Netherlands gives them, when they do occur, the greater probability of excess. It is at all events certain that the company, which sat down at noon on the 25th of April, 1600, to the civic dinner in the banquetting hall of Bruges, did not rise from table till six o'clock in the evening, the interval being passed in the sole occupation of eating and drinking. There was no general

discussion of affairs ; no political harangues, digressions from the main business of the board, which give such interest and dignity to our public dinners. If the attention of the feasters was now and then called off from the flavour of the viands or the wine, it was in broken and furtive whisperings. Here and there two or three persons of the same opinions sat by chance together, and indulged in muttered hints as to what was passing in the town and the country at large. But factions were so various and so fierce, that most of the guests, as they wielded their forks or raised their glasses, were likely to elbow a false friend, or an avowed enemy.

At the head of the principal table, sat the new chief Burgomaster, Siger Van Rozenhoed. The post of honour on his right hand was occupied by Don Juan de Trovaldo, governor of the town ; on his left was the late chief magistrate, an insignificant character, wholly devoted to the Spanish interest. The second Burgomaster, Van Rozenhoed's col-



league, presided at a second table; and the various grades of citizens occupied the other seats in due order of precedence—Echevins, Syndics, Hoofmans, masters of trades, gref-fiers, and other functionaries. Mixed with them were some of the superior officers of the garrison, and several strangers, who were in the place on matters of public duty, or on special purposes of their own.

Among the latter, one was remarkable for his handsome person, and splendid attire. He took his seat at the board, with an air of supercilious haughtiness that savoured too much of Spanish breeding to be palatable to the taste of the Flemish burghers; and he received a stare, as proud as his own was contemptuous, from the young man beside him, one of the conservators of the feast, as was shewn by the bunch of red ribbons that adorned his breast, in common with those of his eleven associates. The man at the other side of the haughty stranger was a master of one of the trades, a sober old citizen, who had neither eyes nor

ears for his neighbour's finery, but who gave his uninterrupted attention to the business of the table.

The stranger, who was no other than Lyderic de Roulemonde, went through the ceremonials of the day with a reserved insolence of demeanour, little like the air of genuine high born pride. He took good care to display his splendid gear and his sparkling brilliants to the notice of the company; and looked as if his eating and drinking was rather complimentary to them than comfortable to himself. He seemed quite isolated in the crowd. He had brought that morning a strong recommendation to the governor, direct from the court of the Archdukes; but when he announced himself to Don Juan, (carefully suppressing the fact of his being his secret correspondent from Welbasch Castle) as one of the suitors of Theresa Van Rozenhoed, he met with a reception such as he had not reckoned on.

“Señor,” said the governor, with the over-

bearing air of official power, "I am bound to receive you with honour, in virtue of my station, and your credentials. But as an individual, I frankly tell you, you have my cordial hatred, in common with all aspirants to the hand of the heiress of Bruges, for which I myself am a claimant, in despite and defiance of all others."

"I admire your frankness, most excellent Sir," replied Lyderic, in a tone which implied that he despised it, "and I shall avail myself of it by knowing an enemy, and keeping on my guard."

"As you please, Señor. I am ready, at any time, and in all ways, to maintain my right, which neither daring nor caution shall thwart. The maiden is mine, by her father's promise. How came you to start a presumption to her hand?"

"I am not here, Governor, to be catechised. If I am well informed, the field, like the lists in a *pas d'armes*, is open to all comers. No contract has been signed, no pledge exchanged.

I may have a title as good as another's ; and, even in opposal to your Excellency, may indulge a hope."

A self-satisfied glance at his person in the governor's high mirror, and a look of disdain upon the gaunt and murky rival who stood beside him, accompanied this speech. The choleric Spaniard would have retorted, but Lyderic declined the wordy contest ; and, with short leave-taking, he closed the interview, and repaired to one of the hostels in the principal square, where he had taken apartments for himself and his varlet. There he found, to his infinite surprise, the promised letter from his late colonel, and quondam friend, De Bassenvelt. How it came to the inn he could not ascertain. He discovered it lying on the table in his chamber ; but to all inquiries, as to the bearer or the hour of its arrival, he met no satisfactory reply. The house, like all others of public entertainment in the town, was crowded in every corner ; and in the continual passing and re-passing through the kitchen, corridors,

and chambers, ill-secured and loosely watched, nothing was easier than the insertion of a billet, or the translation of an object of greater bulk or consequence. It was clear, however, that nothing was taken in exchange for the epistle which now met Lyderic's eyes. Every thing was as naturally displaced and confused as was usual with the careless varlet, who attended to his own pleasures rather than his master's wardrobe.

Lyderic turned the letter over and over in his hands, in search of some token that might discover its conductor, but in vain. He opened it at length, and read as follows, in the handwriting of Count Ivon, and in the French language, in which the general correspondence and intercourse of the highest society in Flanders, as well as Brabant, was at all times carried on.

“That I still live, Lyderic, these lines are my warrant. That I owe you nought for that blessing, I am well assured. The Moriscoe has told me all he knew of his own mission. Bea-

trice has explained your designs on her. In one word, I know you; and even when you parted hence, I thought I could read the depths of your heart. I have no reproaches for you. I thank you rather for the lesson you have taught me—but beware! You are now, even when you get this, my entrusted messenger. My hopes and my heart are all engaged in the success of your suit. Plead for me well. Your recommendation will be backed from a higher quarter than you dream of. And mark me! I have friends in Bruges, powerful and watchful. The way in which this will reach you, will tell you their prudence and their easy access to you. Take warning; and by honest zeal *now*, repair your late strange treachery. It is not for me alone you act. Your life is periled on the event. Play me false, and you die!”

Nothing could be less calculated to put Lyderic in a pleasant mood than his interview with the governor, thus followed up. It was not that he did not feel a certain relief in the assurance that Ivon had not fallen a victim to

his treachery. His mind was mean, but not yet ferocious ; and although he felt enough of hate, he had no real spring of revenge to overflow his feelings towards his former friend and benefactor. But then Beatrice's avowal of his treachery towards him ; the Moriscoe's failure of nerve or purpose ; and finally the fact that he was himself now watched and hovered over (perhaps by that self-same wily agent) in the servile task of doing another's bidding, and even betraying that, formed a host of agitating causes, all of them sinking him deeper and deeper in his own esteem. His appetite for the burgomaster's dinner may be well supposed to have been slight ; and he repaired to the feast, in just such a mood as was sure to make him as repulsive to others as he was unsatisfied with himself.

Having for a considerable time looked on the scene, in the spirit and manner already described, he began to feel the necessity of obtaining information as to the best means of approaching, in his wooing capacity, the private

residence of Van Rozenhoed, where a splendid ball was to be given that night, and where Theresa was to be introduced into life, and receive the homage of her suitors, in a way as formidable to her as it was meant to be imposing in the eyes of the world.

Lyderic, on arriving in Bruges the preceding day, had transmitted to the burgomaster the letter of public introduction which he obtained at Brussels through the influence of Don Zeronimo Zaputa, the home minister of the archdukes, with whom he had been in more particular communication relative to the defection of De Bassenvelt from the royal cause. From this wily Spaniard he met a warm reception and a ready accession to all his particular views. But he could do nothing to forward them directly, beyond such an official recommendation as would secure him an honourable reception from Van Rozenhoed. The well-known patriotism of the latter was proof against any insidious influence from the source of government and power. So, once introduced, Lyderic

was left to work his own way. His letter of credence was duly acknowledged by immediate invitations to the dinner and the ball, the first of which he was now acting on, while he began to prepare for the second. With this view, he at length turned to his neighbour at the dinner-table, and assuming a courtly and gracious manner, he addressed him—

“ If, Sir, as a stranger, and unhonoured by a formal presentation, I may venture the liberty of speech with you, I would ask at what hour the guests are likely to assemble this evening at the mansion of the worthy burgomaster ?”

The young burgher, taken somewhat by surprise at the condescending humility of this speech, and not a little gratified after all, in spite of his pride, to be spoken to in that way by a person of such evident quality, replied—

“ The name of a stranger, Sir, is quite enough to ensure you my attention, or that of any citizen of the place. The fête at Rozenhoed House begins at seven o’clock ; I presume, Sir, you are among the invited ?”

“ I am,” returned Lyderic ; “ but being quite alone here and unknown, save by my public recommendations, I own myself at a loss as to the points of etiquette observable in your good towns of Flanders.”

“ A cavalier of your bearing, Sir,” said the young citizen, “ could surely find himself at no loss in any society ; and such an appearance as yours is a fair passport anywhere.”

“ Manners, my worthy Sir, may be of general adaptation, as your politeness seems to imply. But forms may differ ; and he who may not find himself at fault in the presence-chamber of a palace, might be puzzled as to the punctilio of a burgomaster’s ante-room. In short, Sir, as you seem by your badge to be official here, I take it for granted you are to be of the guests at Mynheer Van Rozenhoed’s fête ; and if you will extend the courtesy of speech into action, so far as to be my personal introducer on the occasion, I shall acknowledge myself your debtor, and, I trust, do no dishonour to your notice.”

The supercilious tint that coloured this address did not efface the dazzling effect on the mind of the young citizen, in the prospect held out to his own consequence, by the patronage solicited of him from so superfine a subject ; and he willingly acceded to Lyderic's flattering application.

“ But then,” continued Lyderic, in addition to some passing remarks given and received, as to the ceremonial of the occasion, “ it is of no small moment to be presented to the heiress herself at a good opportunity. So many suitors are to be introduced, that one runs a risk of being confounded in the crowd ;” and a glance of consciousness stole over his own person and its attire. “ How many proposals are reckoned on as likely to assail the maiden fair ?”

“ Alas ! Sir,” said the young burgher, deeply sighing, “ I care not to enter on the fearful enumeration. I know of but one, all hopeless as it may be, which it behoves me to calculate on—my own !”

“ What ! are you too on the list ? Why,

every man I meet to-day is bent on this adventure. If it were but to avoid the servile herd, one would do well to stand aloof. I crave your pardon, Sir, for this blunt speech ; and you will grant it, I am sure, when I honestly avow that I myself am here on a wooing embassy to this heiress."

" Indeed !" exclaimed the young man, listlessly setting down the glass which he had mechanically emptied.

" Your air does not smack of jealousy," observed Lyderic. " The same avowal this morning to his puissant Donship the governor, had nearly gained me a quarrel."

" Let those be jealous who have hope !—for me 'tis all the same, no rival, or a dozen. The beautiful, the gifted Theresa, could never condescend to be mine !"

" Why then persist in the design of wooing her ?"

" Even as a blind man turns towards the sun, basking in the beams whose brightness is not for him. I will prefer my presumptuous suit.

She shall at least know I glory in the very pride of loving her ; and I am sure of her pity for my hapless passion."

The author of this speech, which made him thoroughly contemptible in the eyes of the more aspiring Lyderic, was interrupted by loud calls from various quarters of the table, for supplies of Hockeim, Johannigsberg, and Auvernat, which it was his duty to provide. He started up at the reiterated demands upon him, and gave directions in accordance with the wants which the revellers were creating for themselves. Then he made an arrangement with his neighbour, who professed an intention to retire, by which he was to call on him at his hostel, at seven precisely ; and, in exchange for the titles and address of " Lyderic de Roulemonde, Baron Verlinden of Brabant, Captain in the service of the Archdukes," he gave his simple name and residence, " Renault Claassen, Tanner's Street, Bruges."

" Well now, let us see !" said Lyderic to himself, as he paced the great square in his way

from the town-house to his hostel, “ how stands the account ? Here I am, on my own good authority and assumption, a baron without a barony—a captain without a troop—a soldier without a service—an adventurer without a sequin ! Starting on a race of life and death, unaided, and almost unknown. Discovered in one treachery, and spied upon in another. Going a wooing to a girl I never saw, without introduction or recommendation but these good limbs and this comely face. Heaven give me courage to carry me well through ! But I do not feel my heart throb with the bold energy that in such a case would have urged on Ivon. Cursed name ! why does it thus cross me, and always in the feeling of my own inferiority ? Be it so ! Now, at least, I have not his personal rivalry to encounter. And who *are* my rivals ? This braggart governor, harsh and hideous as he is—this sneaking burgher, and the like ? Out on such scurvy competitors—they cannot stand before me ! But *he*, that one, unseen, un-

known as he is—the ban of the state upon him!—the curse of the church!—the very heart he dares to sue for, outraged and up against him, by his own confession!—I know not how it is; but, despite of all, the name of Bassenvelt carries a towering charm about it, and my soul sinks as I enter the contest with even the very shadow of that name! But on, Lyderic, on!—all is now at stake! Find fortune in the issue of this cast, and let revenge, in any shape, but soothe me afterwards! Revenge! Why?—wherefore? No matter—no matter. I hate him, loathe him, for he makes me mine own enemy; and the wrong which Lyderic does himself, shall be avenged on him whose being is the bane of Lyderic's life! And now, to baffle his espionage, and follow my own good purposes!”

With these words he entered the hostel, and bedecked himself in his dress suit of dazzling splendour. He carried nearly his whole fortune on his back. But still, as he proceeded

towards Rozenhoed House, under the guidance of the less richly appavelled Renault Claassen, he did not strike the earth with that undaunted tread which gives to the mere adventurer the brave demeanour of the hero. And why should their bearing be different? 'Tis but a step—the hazard of a die—a single word that separates them—success!

And now we must turn for a while to her on whom all thoughts and views were, on this occasion, fixed—her from whom we have so long been separate, or rather, joined to by a chain of persons and events apparently remote, but all bearing, more or less, a close connexion with her fate.

The moment that Theresa set her foot across the threshold of her father's mansion as its recognized mistress, a total revolution at once took place in her mind. In quitting the convent, where her years of early youth had so quietly glided away, she seemed to throw back upon its walls her infantine habits of thought and action, too indistinct and

unsubstantial in themselves to be dignified with the name of character. She had hitherto been but the reflection of others. If at times a spring of original thought seemed to bubble up in her brain, she started with affright at the unseemly boldness in which it had its source. Her occupations and duties had alike been traced for her, and she followed and observed them with a tacit acknowledgment of the supremacy by which they were laid down. Her education was imbibed in silent passiveness, as the earth receives the rains and dews of heaven ; and it was only when the warm sun of freedom shone upon her, that her acquirements burst forth into bloom, and shewed her their own value.

One science she knew not, or, at least, so imperfectly, that her knowledge was all but ignorance. Yet she felt within her, as soon as thought became fledged and ventured to soar above the bounds in which it had nestled, a yearning to know the human heart. Her learning—her accomplishments, languages, em-

broidery, music — all appeared to her as nought in comparison with that grand study. In her hitherto confined sphere she had few materials for it. The abbess and the sisterhood, moving in the regular circles of their mechanism, offered no contrasts, no points, no angles of comparison. Beatrice alone had furnished aliment for that craving which our heroine felt and loved to feel. In her there was much beyond the conventional commonplace of the rest ; but that something had displayed itself in a form so abrupt and appalling, that Theresa had been confounded too much for reflection. All the habitual train of her feelings suffered a revulsion ; but the elements of thought were thereby brought into play, and her mind seemed to open wide, as if at the pressure of a magic spring. In this Theresa bore an inherited resemblance to her father's character. One marked event, in which she was by chance an actor, brought into life a myriad of sensations the existence of which she knew not, and she found, deep buried

within her own mind, treasures more various and valuable than those which he had discovered in the bosom of the earth.

The night in which she took possession of her turret, elegantly fitted up with all that suited a maiden of condition and wealth, she proved by her whole air and manner that she was calculated to preside, with equal grace and dignity, over the vast establishment in which she had hitherto been regarded but as a child. Every one, from her father down to the lowest menial, was struck with admiration and respect. Nona, who knew her young mistress the best, was more delighted than surprised, for she had watched the budding of the character that now shewed a crop of such abounding fruitfulness.

There was another person, too, somewhat affected by, but little interested in, this sudden display of character. This was Madame Marguerite de Lovenskerke, a cousin of Theresa's late mother—a lady of sufficient rank and insufficient means—a person of unblemished con-

duct and kind manners—one, in short, perfectly qualified to fill the stations of chaperone to the young heiress, and managing mistress of her father's house. Like Beaumont and Fletcher's heroine, "she could do one thousand profitable things: could do well in the pantry; knew how pullets should be crammed; cut cambric at a thread; wove bone-lace; and quilted balls admirably." She had owed much to the kindness and generosity of Siger Van Rozenhoed for a long series of years, and was happy to oblige him, and serve herself, by accepting the office which he offered to her. She was, in the best sense of the word, a good woman. Full of benevolence and kindly temper, tinctured, no doubt, in the spirit of her time, with superstition, and somewhat dependant in her notions of female rights and privileges; and having, withal, a tendency towards the high church and harsh state principles of the dominant tyranny, with doubts of conscience as to the civil and religious pretensions put forth by her friend Van Rozenhoed, and the patriot

party. It was evident to all observers that Theresa, with due respect to the worthy matron, would soon render her situation in the household, nearly a sinecure. Madame Marguerite herself saw this very plainly, in the first hour of Theresa's establishment at home. But the discovery caused her no mortification. She loved ease, and abhorred responsibility; and, certain that she should find at Rozenhoed House, the best and most distinguished treatment, she was quite ready to abdicate all claims to more than the mere precedency of age and experience.

Siger himself felt a new glow of pride and happiness in contemplating his child. His ambitious views for her establishment in life, seemed about to be centred in some point of reality. His objects seemed at once matured; and he anticipated, in the days that now approached, the realization of the hopes, speculations, and labours of his life.

Theresa, the while, began to turn her whole attention to that object which she knew to be

uppermost in her father's mind. That was her own marriage; and she all at once seemed to discover that in such a matter, so contemplated, she was not a personage so unimportant as she had hitherto considered herself. Every circumstance that tended towards that point, struck her now with surprising acuteness. The windows of her mind were opened, and every ray of light rushed in. The devoted admiration of Renault Claassen, the avowed pretensions of Don Juan de Trovaldo, and those of several other expectants, would have cleared any film of doubt as to her own attractions, and that of her reputed fortune. But there were still two circumstances, very opposite in their nature, which made more impression on her than all the rest of those late transactions put together. The first was the outrage committed upon her by the companion of Beatrice's flight. This, viewed in every light, appeared little less than sacrilege, whether it regarded the place, her own purity, or the feelings that should have actuated the man towards the victim of his

libertine passion. Unmitigated disgust, and strong resentment were invariably excited as her thoughts flew back to the subject; and when it was publicly announced by the Governor that Count Ivon de Bassenvelt was notoriously the seducer of Beatrice, Theresa irresistibly joined in the execration profusely heaped on him. The other subject was a perfect contrast to this. It was the night song, so deliciously warbled from the canal, while she leant at her turret window, and caught the strains as they rose up in the pure incense of melody and feeling. The voice, though not strong, possessed a power superior to strength. Its tones seemed to come deeper than from the throat. Its cadences were in the heart; and an impassioned breath, to be felt but not described, wafted the strains unerringly to the breast it was meant to penetrate.

Theresa had listened for its repetition night after night, but in vain; and the vulgar serenaders who broke her slumbers, only excited dreams of a melody beyond their skill, and

awoke her to fits of disappointment and mortification. A fuller explanation of our heroine's sensations must be left to the imaginations which can picture her as she was, and to the feelings of those whose hearts have vibrated to the magic of a sound.

CHAPTER II.

A BLAZE of light, a profusion of ornaments, mirrors, vases, paintings, plants and flowers, have been, since luxury and pleasure have gone hand in hand with civilization, the inseparable accessories of every fête given by refinement, taste, and wealth. Music, in its intoxicating harmonies, splendour in dress, beauty, grace and gallantry, complete the combination. And such was assembled in profuse magnificence at Rozenhoed House, on the night we wish to bring back, in all its life and reality, to our reader's comprehension. Every thing that

money could procure, consistent with the somewhat incongruous contrasts which distinguished the style of furniture and decorations in those days, and that suited such a mansion, had been amply provided by the gorgeous taste of Van Rozenhoed, subdued and regulated as that had been, by the wife who had nurtured it, and the daughter who was now its absorbing object.

The guests, as they entered the square before the house, were dazzled by the lustre of its illuminated front, covered with hundreds of coloured lamps in various fantastic devices, while as many large white wax flambeaux flared from each niche and window. The steps leading to the portico were lined with odorous shrubs. Festoons of flowers were intermixed with various banners that formed a tapestry above, and covered the wainscotting of the entrance hall. The staircase was garnished with the choicest treasures of the greenhouses, not only of Van Rozenhoed but of his friends, who were all proud to contribute towards the

decorations of the fête. The lobbies and corridors were thickly planted with the same kind of ornaments ; and the guests seemed to wander from room to room, through passages of shaded and fragrant pleasure grounds. The soft light from transparent paper lanterns, suspended in the leaves and branches, threw a voluptuous indistinctness around, and formed a soothing contrast to the lustre of the reception rooms, where hundreds of tapers reflected from chandeliers and mirrors of the costliest manufacture of France and Italy, lighted up the gilded cornices and mouldings, the finest tapestry from the looms of Bruges, rich wrought Turkey carpets, and varieties of ornaments, massive or fragile, such as were at that period poured into the harbours of Holland from the many ships employed in the commerce of the east.

Van Rozenhoed was, as has been before observed, a bountiful patron of the arts ; and his house was adorned with busts and statues of exquisite chiselling, and pictures by several of the great artists just then flourishing, at once

the monuments of their genius, and the title deeds of their immortality. Numbers of liveried attendants, with the badge of the Rozenhoed arms fastened on their sleeves, moved to and fro, serving wines, cordials, and other refreshments suited to the taste of those days, and some which bore a patent of approbation for the palates of all time.

All that was distinguished and respectable among the citizens of Bruges and the neighbouring inhabitants, whether noble or plebeian, be their party opinions or religious differences what they might, had been invited to the fête. The family of Claassen, and many other of his public enemies, as well as the officers of the Spanish garrison, obnoxious as they and their cause were to his most secret prejudices, had been bidden by Van Rozenhoed, with his daughter's full consent. As soon as the chimes from the city clocks told seven, and the carillons from the Stadthouse steeple struck up their cheerful yet somewhat discordant announcement of the hour, many an expectant bosom fluttered

with the joy that beats in young hearts longing for a night of pleasure. The arrivals soon became numerous, and in the order suited to the circumstances or taste of the visitors. Some drove on in the few lumbering specimens of carriage-building, which had been but lately established by the nobility or wealthy burghers of Flanders. Others came dragged along in a litter suspended between two poles, in which were yoked as many mules, or horses, one in front, the other in the rear of the coarse vehicle; and in such a machine (as we know by engraved evidence) did the tyrant Alva take his departure from Brussels when he was removed from his ensanguined government. Rude models of those portable chairs, afterwards called sedans, (from their being greatly improved if not actually invented in that town), and upheld by human carriers, bore several of the splendidly dressed townswomen to the scene of the night's festivity. Others came, in attire equally rich, but in more homely state, seated on high backed pillions, behind their husbands,

fathers, or brothers, on the broad flanks of the Flanders' steeds, then, as at all times, celebrated for their height and bulk. The cavaliers of quality appeared on heavily caparisoned horses, the saddle skirts and stirrup leathers covered with housings of cloth, to save the slashed galligaskins and silk hose from risk of stain or ruffle. Close following the horse's long tail, which swept the pavement, and often making use of it to aid his speed, the varlet of the cavalier invariably was seen adapting his paces to those of the other serving animal, and always ready to hold the reins and stirrup when his master was disposed to alight. Many of the less gallantly equipped or less pretending youths, hurried to the fête on foot, bustling through the streets and squares with swaggering air, not sorry to shew their well turned limbs, and hear their rapiers rattling on the stones, as they passed through groups of gazers of all ages and each sex, attracted towards the scene of such popular and proud display ; for the lower orders of Bruges, even in their most

desperate rebellions, had ever great pride in the magnificence of their magistrates.

Most of the company had assembled ; the music sounded from the several orchestras ; the fire works in front of the house, and the illumination of the gardens, had all begun to display their finest effects, when Lyderic de Roulemonde and Renault Claassen were seen advancing towards the grand entrance, the liveried varlet of the former leading his master's handsome and gaily-dressed charger, which the master himself had abandoned, but chose to have paraded after him, while he proceeded arm in arm with his new acquaintance, pleased to display his fine figure and showy dress, in immediate contrast with the less striking and less richly attired citizen.

Once fairly entered into the midst of the splendid scene, Lyderic looked round him with astonishment. He had witnessed entertainments of sumptuous insipidity in Spain, gay carnivals in Italy, and filigree fêtes in France ; but he never before beheld such solid elegance

as he now gazed on. His first feeling was of mingled pride and avarice, as he indulged a momentary thought that all this might one day be his ; and he glowed with the anticipation of success. Renault Claassen threw his eye anxiously across the mass of variegated splendour which filled the spacious anti-chamber, in search of her whose presence would, in his mind, have eclipsed the whole. But he had to traverse a suite of spacious saloons before he reached the chamber where Theresa, with Madame Marguerite, sat in ceremonious state to receive the presentations of the numerous company.

Van Rozenhoed, in the pride of his hospitality, and in his velvet robes of office, with the broad medal of his dignity hung by a massive gold chain on his breast, took his station at the first door which led into the reception rooms, and there received each visitor, whose coming was announced by a long file of echoing domestics. Renault Claassen, who knew that he stood, individually, well in the opinion of his

host, advanced with modest confidence, and received the welcome of the Burgomaster; yet his heart sunk, as he thought that he never might be allowed to give the pressure of affiliated affection to the hand that thus grasped his in common-place cordiality. He promptly proceeded to introduce Lyderic; and having performed the ceremony with suitable decorum, he hastened through the many groups that intervened between him and the object whom his imagination pictured beyond them all.

The Burgomaster received the newly presented stranger with the courtesy that he felt due to a noble cavalier, correctly recommended. But the secret stirrings of his prejudices, and which were, from private motives, just then particularly active, threw an air of reserve and doubt into his manner, towards any avowed partizan of the archdukes and the Spanish dominion. Lyderic, considerably elated by the scene around him, and the hopes it had so strongly excited, was resolved to ingratiate himself into the Burgomaster's favour. For

this purpose he assumed a hypocritical air of respect and diffidence, and avowed that he had not come to the entertainment from mere motives of amusement, but that he attended it for the more serious purpose of advancing the claims of another person, to the honour of an alliance with her, for whom so many an aspirant that night ventured to propose.

On this statement, Van Rozenhoed somewhat abated the reserve of his demeanour; and inviting Lyderic aside, he led him through the adjoining corridor, by a private apartment, directly to the chamber occupied by Theresa. His ruling foible was flattered by the circumstance of so distinguished a young fellow as Lyderic evidently was, being sent on this embassy; little doubting that the principal of such a proxy must be some one of considerable rank and dignity. He therefore resolved on introducing him to his daughter as promptly as possible, ere any other might, by some freak or caprice of woman's nature, have caught her fancy, and decided her choice, a matter which,

from vague notions glanced at before, he wished to hold in indecision.

Theresa and her kinswoman, surrounded by several of the most distinguished females of Bruges and its vicinity, occupied an elevated space, or Dais, at the upper end of this most richly furnished of the suite of saloons. Several steps led to this platform, and allowed all the company to have a full view of the collected beauty that occupied it ; and particularly of her who attracted the admiration of all eyes, and the homage of all hearts.

A canopy of embroidered satin hung above the platform, and a carpet of great price covered it below. The draperies were of the costliest materials ; and velvet cushions received the pressure of the light feet peeping from beneath rich flounces of lace and embroidery. Nothing could exceed the elegance in dress which was there displayed ; and the proverbial beauty of the women of Bruges appeared concentrated to give effect to the scene.

Madame Marguerite de Lovenskerke sat at

Theresa's left hand, her countenance beaming with goodness, and shewing faded remains of no mean share of personal attractions. Her figure was, however, becomingly fat for a widow of fifty, and her hair of unequivocal grey, was plaited across her brow, and evident below her coif, no unworthy trickery having taught her to substitute the false tresses of youth for the natural locks so becoming to age. Her attire was rich, and her ornaments in keeping with it. A large Venetian ivory fan, of exquisite workmanship, and a great luxury in those days, occupied one hand, and the other held a smelling bottle encased in a cover of gold filigree work, studded with diamonds. Hanging from the wrist of this arm was also observed a ribbon, which was fastened to the collar of a little fat French dog, whose tresses (for so his hair might be called) hung thickly over him in spiral curls that seemed composed of snow white silk. He lay on a blue velvet cushion beside that which was occupied by Madame Marguerite's feet ; and as he slept, or

feigned to sleep, his whole face was hidden under the profuse shadowing of those exquisite curls. His doting mistress threw occasional looks of affection and pride at this favourite, but she gave even more of her admiring attention to the beautiful girl who occupied the chair on her right hand, and who looked, what she was,—the virgin queen of the fête.

Theresa sat on her chair, in the quiet consciousness of grace and beauty, equally distinct from the insolence of coquetry, and the scarcely less revolting inanity of bashfulness. Yet her pulse beat quick, and her cheek was flushed at times, with the genuine emotions of modesty and virtue. She did not feel herself there, as a mock personage in a pageant, but as filling a part in the serious drama of life, her performance of which was perhaps to decide her lot for ever. She was attired with appropriate elegance, but not in affected plainness. Her robe of Mechlin lace, her veil of silver tissue, thrown across her shoulders, her diamond

necklace and ear-drops, and the pearls that were strung through the low-falling ringlets of her bright and almost flaxen hair, were all of exceeding value, but assorting so well with each other, and with the character of the wearer's beauty, that the combination they produced was one of rich simplicity. Theresa's complexion was brilliantly fair. Her eyes were of dark hazel, that tempered, as it were, the dazzling whiteness of her skin, and the vermillion of her lips, and imparted to her countenance a softened seriousness, more dignified and not less tender than the expression given by blue eyes, which are generally found associated with such a complexion. Her fully developed figure was such as a sculptor might have desired as a model; or such when she moved along in swelling gracefulness, as might fill an intellectual voluptuary with the true and natural delight excited by the association of physical with mental charms. Nor was there less attraction in her lovely form, when reclining, as at present, in her

chair; no stiff formality cramping her natural ease, but body, head, and limbs all taking the attitudes that seemed chosen by the free will of each, and confirmed by the assenting gracefulness of the whole.

Van Rozenhoed ushered in Lyderic to the full contemplation of this scene, and of her who formed its principal feature. He had led him on by a side door that opened close to the foot of the Dais, the space before which was now thickly crowded with a mixed assemblage of dames and cavaliers, anxious for the ceremony of presentation, which Theresa seemed to await with a degree of gentle agitation, that considerably heightened the effect of her beauty. Madame Marguerite and her surrounding friends conversed with her, in the good natured intention of lessening her emotion; and as she was not actuated by any wish for display, she betrayed no unseemly timidity or want of self-command. Lyderic fixed his eyes on her as she thus appeared, and he felt for an instant the full power of her

charms. But a startling pang of recollection brought before him the more striking countenance of Beatrice, in all the fire of its enthusiastic character; and mingled with the thought came the recollection of her cold and dignified rejection of his overture. A flush of angry pride passed hotly across his brow, and was succeeded by a glow of expectant triumph as he looked once more on Theresa. But his glance, as if mechanically, withdrew itself again, and seemed to sink within him, when he recollected De Bassenvelt, and the fearful threat that hovered over his treachery.

CHAPTER III.

THE actual ceremony of the introduction now commenced. Van Rozenhoed, with no small portion of parental tenderness mixed with his pride, undertaking to offer to his daughter's notice the several claimants for her hand, on her choice depending, as he deeply felt, not only her own happiness, but his. The first person whom he led forward in right of his station, was Don Juan de Trovaldo, who strided up the steps of the platform, the chains and rowels of his gilded spurs and his iron-sheathed rapier trailing after, and his gaunt figure look-

ing disagreeably warlike in his uniform of yellow cloth, slashed with white satin, and splendidly embroidered in passement of gold. The order of the Golden Fleece hung conspicuous, among many others, by a chain passed beneath his highly stiffened ruff; one hand carried a slouched beaver, loaded with ostrich plumes, fastened in front with a clasp of brilliants, and with the other, the governor, as was habitual with him, stroked down his grisly beard, bringing its frizzled consistency as near as might be to a point, towards which the ends of his thick mustachios also tended.

“Theresa, my love,” said Van Rozenhoed, firmly but not unfeelingly, “I have the honour of presenting to you Don Juan de Trovaldo, a Spanish captain of repute, and governor of our good town in the name of the archdukes. Don Juan de Trovaldo, allow me to make you known to my daughter.”

With these words of ceremony Van Rozenhoed bowed. Theresa rose and curtsied, and the governor made a haughty inclination, which

indisputably proved him of the stiff-necked generation of the Trovaldos.

“ Young lady,” said he, “ I am proud of an opportunity of doing homage to your beauty and virtue ; and in the plain guise of a soldier I offer myself and my fortune for your acceptance. I would not see dishonour done to the respectable magistrate of this celebrated town ; and to guard against such, I here announce myself the suitor for your hand, scarcely doubting that others of less name or note will care to oppose my offer by their pretensions.”

Stroking his beard again, and grasping somewhat suddenly his sword's hilt, he looked sternly on Theresa, and next on the assemblage round him ; and bowing still more stiffly than before, he turned away, and without quitting the platform entered into conversation with some of the ladies who occupied its seats.

Notwithstanding the menace implied in the governor's words, three or four new candidates pressed forward for presentation ; and foremost among them was a young man

of comely appearance, and lively air, who shewed nothing of the restraint that might be expected in an avowed enemy, in one of the strongest holds of his mortal foes, on the mere sufferance of a pass of safety that was to expire on the morrow. This was Van Rozenhoed's late apprentice, Arnoul de Grimberghe, who had just obtained the appointment of deputy chamberlain in the household of Prince Maurice, and was on the eve of setting out for Holland to take possession of his distinguished post. His family was one of the first consequence, and perhaps the most ancient in Bruges; and they looked forward to his obtaining "the heiress," as the means of honourably improving the dilapidated state of their fortunes, nearly ruined in the civil wars.

Young Arnoul now stepped up to his old master; and smilingly begged he would put his apprentice forward on this trial for happiness and fortune. Van Rozenhoed shook him cordially by the hand, and said,

"Arnoul, my honest lad, you know I love

you, and wish you success through life. No man need well desire a braver or better son-in-law ; and had I not solemnly vowed to leave Theresa wholly to her own choice, no one should have her father's fair word before you. Theresa, this is my old apprentice and young friend, Arnoul de Grimberghe, a good-hearted, well-thinking youth, worthy of the noble house he springs from, and one who has wielded the goldbeater's hammer to no small purpose, as is attested by his new appointment, which need not be more than hinted at in this presence ;" and here he threw a significant glance at Don Juan, and the circle of grim looking Spaniards, which by this time had gathered round their chief.

Arnoul advanced with a careless air ; and slightly blushing, he made an obsequious bow to Theresa, and a slighter one to Madame Marguerite and the other ladies. He addressed a short sentence to the former, expressive of his admiration and his hopes, in language of general gallantry, that evidently had no deeper in-

spiration than in the tongue which uttered it. Theresa received it as it was given; curtsied low; and turned with perfect indifference from Arnoul, as he stooped to caress Madame Marguerite's lapdog, and then moved aside, to make room for the suitor next in succession.

“The next who does us the honour of offering himself to your notice, my daughter,” exclaimed Van Rozenhoed, with a look of real pride of purse, “is the worshipful Nicholas Zannekin, Syndic of the Franc, whose office receives while it gives distinction, in the person of this true-blooded descendant of his great namesake, whose exploits in the three rebellions still live through as many centuries, and who died the death of a real Fleming, on the swords of our country's tyrants in the immortal fight of Cassel.”

A murmur of applause that had a very seditious sound burst from a portion of the hearers of this patriotic impromptu; and on Van Rozenhoed's turning round, he perceived that it was his old enemy Claas Claassen, his four

sons, and some of the protestant party, that had evinced this symptom of sympathy with his allusion. He recovered his composure, despite the frowns that he discovered on the opposite countenances of Don Juan and his subalterns, reflected from those of the late burgomaster, and some of the Spanish faction ; and he handed up, rather closer than was requisite, the grave-looking, and somewhat withered personage so pompously announced. The syndic's sober suit of tawny kersey, garnished with murrey-coloured silk, contrasted sadly with the gay trappings of the gallants around him ; and his melancholy countenance, as he whined forth his proposal, completed a most doleful yet ludicrous display. The young ladies tittered, while the syndic made his speech ; and even Madame Marguerite would have been inclined to join the gathering laugh, had not the worshipful Nicholas Zannekin, in his retreat, untowardly placed one of his feet forward instead of backward, and directly upon the body of the French lapdog. The animal, at all times a keen ob-

server of etiquette, returned the intrusion by a sharp whine, and a most mordant accompaniment of his needle-pointed teeth, which penetrated in the instant through the syndic's russet shoe, and the rhubarb-coloured rosette which covered it from the instep to the toe. The syndic's natural movement was to seize the wounded foot in his hand, but as he stooped to catch hold of it, uttering a shrill exclamation of pain, Madame Marguerite bent towards her assaulted pet, and her head coming directly against the syndic's, he quite lost his equilibrium, tottered backwards, and finally fell down the platform steps, the assemblage below most ceremoniously making way for him as he measured his length on the floor.

This accident, little ludicrous to read of, was irresistibly so to look on, as awkward falls of all kinds universally are, even in the most desperate cases of fox-hunting mishaps, where limb or life may be perilled amidst the laughter of the beholders. Van Rozenhoed, however, was little disposed to join in the peal that now

arose at the expense of the prostrate functionary ; for he feared that the seriousness of the scene might sink into burlesque. So giving orders to a couple of servants to assist the syndic, he hastened to present Renault Claassen, who offered himself to his notice, anxious of the occasion to shuffle, unobserved, through the ceremony, as a timid man in a modern quadrille slurs over his exhibition in the awful character of “ *Le Cavalier Seul*.”

The burgomaster was not more disposed to make any unnecessary display of the young tanner’s pretensions ; so he hastily led him forward, and in a few words introduced him to Theresa. Renault Claassen dared not to look on her. He essayed to speak, but could not ; and Van Rozenhoed was conducting him back to his former station in a window recess, when old Claas sturdily stepped forward, supported by his three other sons and several of his friends, and loudly exclaimed,

“ Speak out, then, Renault, you chicken-hearted poltroon. Lift up your eyes and look

on the lady. Remember, boy, that a hooded hawk never struck the heron. Bear with his bashfulness, young lady. I vouch for his straight forward honesty when put to the push. He is a kind youth, and well intended, though somewhat abashed by this fine company and his own faint heart."

He would have continued longer in this strain, which was gradually attracting listeners from all quarters, had not Van Rozenhoed hastily brought forward another suitor, and unceremoniously stepped between the old hide-wetter and Theresa, who felt ashamed of this vulgar parent to the modest youth, whose evident attachment raised a blush of pure emotion on her cheek, and caused her to look after him with an expression of genuine kind feeling.

"Aye!" cried Claas Claassen, observing the blush and the look, "aye! I'll wager fifty florins to a brass stuyver, that, as sure as a tanpit wears the hair from a hide, Renault might rub out all obstacles to the girl's consent, if he had but one spark of his father's spirit, or knew

either a lover's trade or his own. She loves the lad; I see it clearly—"

His discourse was here cut short by some of his more prudent friends, who hustled him deeper into the crowd, advising him to let things proceed quietly, and not awaken the proud suspicions of Van Rozenhoed. Old Claas followed their advice; but loudly muttered, during his retreat, coarse sarcasms against "the upstart impudence of some people, whom he well remembered without a crown in the pocket of their greasy fustian jerkin, yet who were now a-days"—but the rest of his reminiscences were stifled in the suffocating perfumery, from which he was anxious of escaping, to the odours of Tanner's Street, and his own bark pits and drying lofts.

In the meantime, Van Rozenhoed was ushering forward a new candidate, in the person of Cornelis Vandergobble, burgher and exburgomaster of Antwerp, partner of one of the richest houses in the India trade, a man of much wealth and few words—a considerable oddity in manners and in person, yet still a man of no

small capacity in his way, and one whose conduct in matters of some moment had been, ere then, tried and found good.

This man of the counting-house was either superior to, or unable to understand, the minute distinctions of dress, in those days of such importance to the lowliest pretenders to gentility, and the paramount consideration with persons of fashion. He was, therefore, one of the worst dressed men in the Netherlands; that is to say, with regard to the sorting and fashioning of the materials, which were of themselves of the best quality, and ordered by their wearer in no niggard spirit. The suit which he had expressly chosen for Van Rozenhoed's fête was meant to be particularly striking, and it was so. The doublet and mantle were of orange cloth, a colour which he venerated as the emblem of Dutch freedom; and the effect of which, on the prejudices of others, he gave himself no care to calculate. Pink taffeta linings, ribbons and poslo, with lace of crimson and gold, and a profusion of gilt filigree buttons, glared out in every

part of his attire. The rosettes of his shoes were also orange, and of huge proportions, as well as those at the knees of his monstrous breeches, which formed an exaggerated specimen of the then existing grotesqueness of Dutch costume.

Vandergobble was almost a stranger in Bruges, but his performance at the banquet that day had, in addition to his appearance, excited extraordinary attention. He proved himself unquestionably the greatest eater of the hundreds there assembled ; and amply confirmed the report of the few who recognized him, and which quickly spread around, that he was the most celebrated glutton of Antwerp. When it was further bruited that he had repaired to Bruges for the express purpose of eating his share of that dinner, and afterwards of entering the lists as a suitor for the fair heiress, considerable curiosity was excited, among the female part of the assembly in particular, to obtain a sight of the stranger. Imagination was on the stretch to picture his personal appearance ; and the pre-

vailing fancy endowed him with the most seemly attributes of corporate and corporal distinction—a bald head, broad shoulders, and stout limbs, with jowl and paunch proportioned to his reputation. The surprise of the beholders was therefore not trifling, when they beheld Van Rozenhoed leading forward a tall lank man, of stature most disproportioned with his bulk, if *bulk* it might be called, which was the least possible of fleshly coverings for bone and muscle. There was a mingled expression of sensual and shrewd vivacity in his countenance; his sharp nose, compressed lips, and lantern jaws, suiting well with small grey eyes, sand-coloured locks and eyebrows, and a stunted crop of thin whitish hair, that fringed his chin and upper lip in the semblance of a beard.

When this bedizened figure stood up erect upon the platform, outtopping all observers of either sex, the risible inclination of the company not having subsided since the syndic's mishap, became utterly unrestrainable; and Van Rozenhoed hurried through the form of presentation,

leading off his protégé without giving him time for the utterance of a sentence, being satisfied, for reasons to be explained hereafter, with having gone through the form of introduction in this case, and reserving all its substantial objects for the person whom he next ushered forth to the attention of his daughter and the company at large. The moment he reappeared on the steps of the platform leading up Lyderic, the half-stifled bursts of laughter subsided, and a murmur of admiration, whose contrast with the late sounds gave it a tone of respect, acknowledged the effect produced by this new candidate.

Lyderic walked firmly up, in the consciousness of his attractions, and stood opposite to Theresa, and in full view of the assembly ; while Van Rozenhoed rehearsed his name and quality, and at once damped expectation and excited curiosity, by announcing that the suitor sued not for himself, but merely came as the representative of another, whose name it

was his especial duty to announce, and whose proposals he would presently deliver.

Every one pressed forward at this exordium, and amidst the surprise visibly excited among the ladies, at Lyderic's being but substitute for some yet unnamed claimant, a shade of something resembling disappointment, or wounded vanity, or other weakness of woman's nature, passed for an instant across Theresa's brow. She blushed as she encountered Lyderic's confident gaze; yet she quickly composed herself, and listened with calm demeanour while he spoke.

Lyderic had prepared himself for the part he was now about to perform. Animated with the double motive of serving his own ends, and keeping apparent faith with De Bassenvelt, of whom he felt an undefinable dread, he warily began,

“ Were I, most worthy Sir, abruptly to announce to this young lady, in this distinguished presence, the name of him on whose mission I am here, I should fear the conse-

quence of a resentment not unmerited on my part. I am peculiarly and somewhat hardly situated, between the desire to keep faith with another, and still guard against being identified with his presumption. In the uncalculating warmth of friendship I undertook this task. In the faith of a solemn promise I perform it. But circumstances which have since occurred make me anxious to disown all wilful participation in what now can be considered but an insult. To you, most worshipful Sir, and to this amiable object of the general admiration and your own solicitude, I hope to be allowed to offer the only atonement which may extenuate the offence I am forced to bear a part in."

This unusual preface to a proposal of marriage, excited a profound attention. The crowd below the platform gradually closed in, and those in the first line invaded the steps which had been hitherto held sacred. Don Juan and the other suitors shewed, in different degrees, how much they were excited. Strong expecta-

tion was depicted on all countenances ; and Theresa felt her bosom heave in rapid rise and fall against the boddice that so gracefully displayed its fair proportions.

Van Rozenhoed, surprised and disappointed, shewed an impatient anxiety to hear the name of one denounced by his own ambassador to anticipated failure and disgrace. He hastily said to Lyderic, assuming the semblance of a proud indifference,

“ We are all ready, Sir, to listen to the announcement which you prepare us to receive, with unconcern, if not contempt.”

Lyderic felt checked by this brief and haughty speech, and withdrew his gaze from Theresa's face. He felt all the awkwardness of his situation ; but by a strong exertion he summoned up his courage and said,

“ Trusting to the candour and consideration of all towards myself in this strange juncture, I will mention the name, and then efface the recollection by offering——”

At this instant a voice exclaimed “ Beware !”

in a tone neither loud nor menacing, but rather like the involuntary utterance of a well-meant caution. A general start seemed to move the whole assembly ; and every eye was quickly fixed upon him to whom the warning was addressed. Lyderic turned hastily round at the mysterious expression, but sought in vain for an individual on whom to affix its utterance. The buzz which the interruption excited soon subsided, and all looked and listened again, to mark the effect produced on Lyderic, and to catch the name so excitingly introduced. He resumed his position, and addressing himself firmly, but with a soft and humiliated tone to Theresa, continued,

“ I know not, fair lady, the source nor the purport of this interruption. I have had a threat to-day already, which passed unheeded by, as this does now, nor shall it thwart a purpose known but to my own heart. To lay that heart, in the warmth of its admiration and devotion, at your feet, is the fullest, though a feeble, atonement for the wrong I unwillingly

do you, in first putting forward the pretensions to your hand and fortune of him whose suit I come to plead, Ivon de Bassenvelt, Count of Welbasch."

The half-averted bow with which Lyderic accompanied the mention of this name seemed the signal for a burst of wonderment, indignation, and affright, such as might have suitably followed the incantation of *Duyvels Konst*, as the Flemish language expressively renders our word magic. Ivon de Bassenvelt seemed, in its effects on this occasion, an appellation worthy of the highest place in the muster roll of Demonology. It was repeated in a chorus of shrill treble and low bass voices. The whole of the Catholic party, whether patriots or slaves, revolted from the mention of him whose sacrilegious violation of a holy house, and abduction of a child of the church, was now notoriously established. Van Rozenhoed, more particularly irritated, as founder of the polluted convent, no sooner heard Lyderic pronounce De Bassenvelt's name than his whole stock of pride and

passion was up, and it would have instantly exploded had not the fiercer elements of Don Juan de Trovaldo's temperament forestalled him.

“ Saints, devils, and demons !” cried he, stamping with such force on the platform as to shake the whole construction, and fiercely grasping his rapier, and half drawing it from the scabbard, “ Who or what have we here ? Who dares to mention the name of the proscribed and accursed De Bassenvelt ? A claimant for the hand and fortune of Van Rozenhoed's daughter ! An opponent to my suit ! The abductor of my ward ! The ravisher—the renegade—the traitor ! Know you, Master Magistrate, and ye all who hear me, loyal citizens and fair dames, that this same De Bassenvelt has gone over to the ranks of the amphibious and lubberly Dutch, thrown off his allegiance to our noble sovereigns, and raised the standard of revolt ? Aye, my masters and ladies all, ye may well start and stare, but so it is, and more. He has joined with him that

arch and outlawed rebel, Martin Schenck ; and this day has brought me news that half Brabant and Hainhault are in arms ; St. Andrews, Crevecœur, and others of the strongest fortresses, in open mutiny ; and the whole state in danger, by the doings of this dog De Bassenvelt, whom some one dares to stand up for in this goodly company ! Who is his spokesman ? Let us see !”

With these words he strided forward close to Lyderic, who maintained his post, undismayed by actual fear for personal results, but sorely confounded by the boisterous agitation produced by his speech, which had evidently affected Theresa herself in a most painful degree, so as to leave her no apparent recollection of the offer of his own hand, introduced, as he thought, so cunningly. Somewhat confounded and irresolute as to his best mode of acting, he stood still when the governor approached him, and remained superciliously silent, as he poured forth a torrent of insolent taunts and threats that were meant to crush Lyderic’s individual

expectations, while in seeming solely directed against De Bassenvelt.

“ By the Virgin and the life of my saint !” continued Trovaldo, in conclusion of his tirade, “ I doubt, my gallant cavalier, if it be not my duty to arrest you on the spot, as an accomplice of your reprobate employer. You have been recommended well, ’tis true, but I know not what fraud may have imposed on the Archduke’s minister. What say you, Mynheer Van Rozenhoed ? Though not my wont to consult with magistrates in cases of state offence, this touches your private honour, and merits your opinion.”

While the governor spoke the speech here recorded, much and various excitement animated his listeners. We have faintly depicted the agitation of the Spanish party at the mere mention of De Bassenvelt’s name. But their transports were beyond description at the announcement of his treason. While on the other hand, the protestant portion of listeners, who were highly pleased at the carrying off of

a novice, felt the perpetrator of that act to be a perfect hero when they heard he was also a rebel. And even the catholic patriots, and among them Van Rozenhoed, began, in their own despite, to suffer a conflict of sentiments for and against the culprit, as they viewed his conduct, by turns, in a religious or a political aspect.

Lyderic de Roulemonde stood before this mass of contradictory feelings as the type of the person who caused them all. It mattered naught what he said, or felt, or intended, relative to Count Ivon de Bassenvelt. He had come there to represent him, and he was there in his stead. He was, therefore, invested with all the responsibility of a proxy, and assailed with the odium, or supported with the good will of the several factions. As soon as Don Juan had put his question to the Burgo-master, the latter, influenced by his joy at the effects of De Bassenvelt's revolt, replied, as he half turned towards Lyderic :

“ Don Juan de Trovaldo, since you thus

appeal to me, I must urge my opinions and my influence justly. This gentleman is my guest, and I claim the right to protect him ; nor do I see aught in his conduct to deserve rebuke. Though the name of the person whose pretensions he put forward, has shocked us all, in reference to one unholy deed, there may be redeeming qualities attached to that name, which christianity commands us to consider. But this gentleman is at least unsullied by any participation in his former friend's offence ; and may perhaps merit a share in whatever redounds to his honour."

This speech had such evident reference to De Bassenvelt's revolt, that all the patriots were elated with new courage at Van Rozenhoed's boldness, sanctioning their views and identifying himself with them, in his robes of office, and in the very teeth of their fierce and powerful foe. They could not repress their excited feelings ; and many voices uttered approving acclamations of the burgomaster's sentiments, while a few, still louder, though less discreet,

cried “ Liberty !” “ A Bassenvelt !” “ Our country free !” and similar expressions of open disaffection.

Don Juan, astonished and inflamed at this daring burst of defiance, gnashed his teeth with rage. Forgetting all respect of time or place, he again clapped his hand on his sword, and was drawing it forth, till arrested by the shrieks of Madame Marguerite and other ladies, in which the loud barking of Fanchon, the French lap-dog, shrilly joined, as well as deeper sounds of disapproval, cries of “ Shame, shame !” and more personal exclamations of disgust. Almost all the females rose from their seats, and many fled from the salon ; while the male part of the assembly hustled towards the scene of tumult, upsetting or displacing furniture and decorations with little ceremony, and mingling together in a mass of utter confusion.

“ My guard, my guard, ho !” vociferated Trovaldo ; and his officers rushed round him, repeating his call, and some hurrying in search of the armed men.

“Has the poison then spread thus far, and is the burgomaster’s house the rallying point of treason? ’Tis well concerted, but it shall not triumph. No beggarly burgesses shall dare to brave my power. Mynheer Van Rozenhoed, look to this! This be on your head! I am well warned that emissaries of the Dutch, creatures of the bold rebel, Maurice of Nassau, lurk this moment in the town, ripening the too ready minds of some base traitors for revolt. You, Sir, captain, baron, or be you what you may, I take for one; and I here arrest you in the name of the sovereign archdukes; but in honour of Don Zeronimo Zaputa, whose introduction you bore, you shall rest secure within the government-house. Mynheer Magistrate, I call on you to bestir yourself, as you prize your head, to seek for, and seize the other spies within the city! To arms, officers! To your quarters all! Treble the guards; draw out the garrison! I proclaim the town and suburbs insurgent and rebellious!”

Lyderic was seized by a subaltern Spaniard

who demanded his sword. This he readily resigned ; for he was by no means displeased with the turn things had taken. His footing seemed secure with Van Rozenhoed—he had avowed his love and tendered his hand to Theresa—and he knew that by one talismanic word he could change the governor from his jailer into his patron. Pleased with the hope of playing upon all, he submitted to captivity with as much pleasure as other men hail freedom ; and making an obsequious bow to Theresa, who amidst the whole tumult had quietly kept her seat, he followed the officer from Rozenhoed House ; and was soon installed in its immediate neighbourhood in a safe chamber in that of the governor.

In the mean time the burgomaster, agitated by a variety of emotions, bore a good countenance as he confronted the imperious governor.

“ Don Juan,” retorted he firmly, as Trovaldo ceased to speak, “ at your own peril be these outrageous proceedings. I protest against them in

the name of the citizens whose rights I represent. You affront our peaceable town and invade our privileges, in stigmatizing our burghers as spies and insurged revolters. Your own violence has caused this scandalous disturbance, which be on your own responsibility. As to me, you have personally done me insult and wrong; turning my house into a place at arms, and outraging our festivities. Take warning then, never as a visitor to place your foot across my threshold; never as a suitor to raise your thoughts towards my daughter. The word is said, Señor,—so frowns and menaces will avail nothing. I stand on the rights of the city and my own integrity.”

He then turned towards Theresa and the other ladies, and speaking to the company at large, proclaimed that the various other gentlemen, who had meant to honour his daughter, in being presented specially to her, must defer their introduction till the morrow, the trouble thus excited making the present time unfitting. He then begged his guests not to be alarmed by what they had just witnessed, promising

them the whole protection of the civil power, and inviting them to pass to the ball-rooms, where the dancing should now commence, in spite of the rude violence of the governor.

Trovaldo, daring and impetuous as he was, felt that he had gone too far; but, in his haughty insolence, he could not retract; and, galled by Van Rozenhoed's scornful rejection of him, he plunged deeper still in his harsh proceedings. His guard had by this time entered the house, and mingled fiercely with the guests, many of whom fled, and among them several of Theresa's intended suitors, who had shrunk back on Don Juan's first defiance, and were now glad to withdraw from a contest with him altogether; and it was soon proved that in doing so they were prudent, if not valorous or gallant, for his next orders were for the seizure of all those who had braved his menace and been presented to Theresa.

Renault Claassen, whose voice was clearly recognized in the seditious cries, and Nicholas

Zannekin, the discomfited syndic of the Franc, whose rebel name was in itself a plea for the despotic deed, were instantly laid hold of, and carried off in close custody. The arrest of Vandergobble, as a suspected stranger in the city, and young Arnoul de Grimberghe, was next commanded; but they had both disappeared. Don Juan left the house, followed by his myrmidons and the greater part of the Catholics; but many of the patriot citizens remained, resolved to support their magistrate, and, by following up the pleasures of the night, at least in seeming, stamp the violence of the governor with the mark of their contempt as well as reprobation.

During the bustle of this whole scene, annoying, irritating, and even alarming as it was, Theresa had not shewed one symptom of feminine weakness. She looked conscious, but not vain, of the presence of mind more becoming to the gentlest of her sex than the sometimes involuntary and sometimes forced

display of fainting fits and hysterics. From the moment that Lyderic had named De Bassenvelt, she neither spoke nor screamed, while all around her was confusion and dismay ; but she observed and noted all, and felt her heart throb with the various emotions excited by what was said and done. Trovaldo's insolence—her father's indignation—the different effects produced on the visitors by the news so suddenly announced—the various overtures made to her, were sufficient materials of anxiety. But rising above all, was the strongly revived remembrance of Beatrice's flight, and the personal indignity she had herself then suffered, which now, brought home to her by its perpetrator's audacious offer, oppressed her with a stifling sense of pain. She feared to utter a sound or move a limb, lest the swell of pride that heaved her bosom might have caused her to burst into tears. Seizing the first possible opportunity, when Trovaldo and his followers stalked away, and while her father and Madame Marguerite

were employed in tranquillizing the guests that remained behind, Theresa stole from the saloon, and hurrying by a private stair that led to her own turret, she passed through its low door, and took refuge in the garden.

The numberless tapers within the house, and the torches and lamps ranged along the ballustrade, poured a flood of light on the basin and neighbouring bridge and quays, and brought out into bold relief every object of the scene formerly described. The long poplar colonnade that lined the Duyver—the towers of Notre Dame—the governor's house—the Dominican Cloister, and the several private buildings intermixed with these, seemed looking out upon the scene in which they all formed prominent objects; while the clear bosom of the basin mirrored them again in inverted accuracy, and completed the beauty of a view exquisite in its kind.

The thick foliage of the full grown shrubbery concealed Theresa from the observation of the thousands of spectators who lined the

edges of the basin, gazed from the neighbouring windows, or promenaded on the quays, catching glimpses of Rozenhoed House through its veil of light, and speculating on the fate and fortune of its beautiful young mistress, whom they fancied at the moment revelling in admiration and happiness. Not one among them saw her as she hastily passed under the branching canopy of lilacs and laburnums, entered one of the arbours, and, throwing herself on its carved-wood seat, gave a full flow to the rush of tears that she was no longer able nor willing to restrain.

The relief was instantaneous; but she still wept, even while the excitement passed away. Her tears no more gushed forth in bitterness; but fell like the showers that are scattered from an exhausted thunder cloud, so light that they dissipate into mist before they can reach the earth. Indulging this innocently voluptuous mood, Theresa still sat, her arms resting on the rustic supporters of her gothic chair, and her cambric handkerchief to her

face, when she started at the sound of some one breathing close beside her, in the momentary interval of a break in the music which now softly issued from the ball-room. She looked up; and saw, in an attitude of respectful anxiety, a figure dressed in black, which she immediately recognized for that of Lambert Boonen, the young man whom her father had hastily introduced to her as his new apprentice, while she passed through a corridor from her turret, just before the arrival of the first visitors that evening. She had then scarcely observed the modest looking youth, and had not perceived or thought of him since. She was startled, as we have said, but not displeased at his present appearance. The light, streaming through every interstice of leaves and branches, shewed his face and figure plainly; and she saw, with the quickness of a woman's glance, that his attitude and features were expressive of eager respect and suppressed admiration.

We have shown that Theresa was not by

nature a coquette; but she was acutely sensible to the odour of that incense which is thrown up by the heart before the throne of beauty. She had been not quite intoxicated, but both soothed and elevated, by the homage already paid her; and there was something interesting in the eloquent and not ungraceful expression that pervaded the face and form of the young man now before her. She therefore listened with a softened attention, while he proffered a few words of apology for his intrusion, and expressed his fears that she might have been indisposed.

In the words thus uttered, there was nothing that would not have been common place from the lips of a common place person; but there was an insinuating air in their expression, and a tone in the voice that spoke them, that caused Theresa a thrill of surprise and pleasure. She felt convinced that the utterer of this short sentence, and the serenader of a few nights back, were one and the same. There was nothing in the discovery that actually

touched her heart ; but it affected her imagination—and the road between them is soon and easily traversed. Theresa could not be insensible to her own singular and interesting situation in life ; and, like all persons who unite sensibility with talent, she had aspirations beyond mere matter-of-fact, which for want of a better name we must call *romantic*. She was, as has been sufficiently seen, quickly alive to sudden impressions ; and she now felt strongly affected by the combination of place and circumstance in which she thus found herself. As to the young man who stood beside her, she had not time to form any speculation. She could only conceive the sudden thought that he, like the rest, admired her, and run in her mind a rapid contrast between the turbulent and proud display she had just escaped from, and the calm sincerity of look which blended so well with the melody of his voice. A moment sufficed for this ; and with no longer delay she answered his address, as briefly as he had spoken it. She thanked him

for his attention; and assured him she had only felt passingly incommoded by the heat of the rooms.

“ Enough took place there, indeed,” replied he, “ to cause the gentlest blood to boil, with more than passing emotion !”

“ Were you, Sir, within the saloon just now ?” asked Theresa, led on to prolong the conversation by the animation of the apprentice’s words, which seemed so inconsistent with his timid air and his plain unfashioned dress.

“ At the wish of my very worshipful master, I did for a space mingle with the throng within. Unwisely, perhaps, for I gazed too long, methinks, and heard too much, to suit with the calm tenor of a student’s life.”

“ Indeed !” exclaimed Theresa, involuntarily, and half playfully, for she felt a rising sensation of amusement, at the vivacity with which the apprentice confessed his feelings.

“ Indeed I did !” replied he, with stronger emphasis ; “ my eyes took in large draughts

of beauty, while my ears were filled with words of daring insolence. My heart seemed to imbibe each and all; and it swelled with opposing feelings. I could have laid down life to avow myself the champion of her, at once so honoured and so outraged."

The energy with which this was uttered, changed the whole current of Theresa's thoughts. She found it no longer ludicrous; nor was it at all alarming. Yet she felt startled; and she looked inquiringly towards the speaker's face, as he finished his phrase. She saw it lighted up with animation. His eyes sparkled, his lips quivered, and his attitude was full of spirit. Theresa no longer marked the plainness of his costume, nor the inelegance of the black skull-cap, which gave a baldness of look to his countenance, peculiarly disfiguring at an epoch when a full growth of curls formed the common (as they are at all times the most becoming) ornament of either sex. She could only mark the unequivocal expression of admiration pervading his face; nor was she

displeased to see it subside into one of abashed humility, as his eyes caught hers.

The momentary impulse was to rise and retire ; and as she stood up, and he respectfully made way for her withdrawal from the harbour, she asked, with a gracious tone, if he did not mean to rejoin the festivities ?

“ No ;” replied he, “ I have no taste for pleasures like those. I am about to take possession of my turret, and must there forget its neighbouring enjoyments.”

“ Well, well, Sir,” said Theresa, assuming rather than regaining a lively air, “ even in a turret like yours, I hope some enjoyment may be found, for I am the occupier of its fellow here.”

“ Are you ?” exclaimed he, eagerly. “ Then it is you whom I am proscribed from noticing, by word or look ?”

“ Me, Sir !” cried Theresa, in extreme surprise, and no small curiosity. “ By whom can such strange prohibition be decreed ?”

“ By my reverend relative, the prior, and

my worshipful master, your father. It is the strict condition on which I enter in possession of my place."

"And you have thus already forfeited your tenure?" said Theresa, with a still more natural tone of gaiety, for the prompt frankness of the young student unequivocally amused her.

"Ah, lady! what would I not forfeit for the happiness of one moment such as this!" replied he, in a tone of such firmness, and such softness combined, that it told there was a depth of truly-felt emotion far below. Theresa thought the words now, as well as the voice that breathed them, seemed to penetrate her breast; and, without again looking on the apprentice, she hurried from the arbour, and was in a moment more within the house again.

CHAPTER IV.

LONG sounding peals from the several steeples of Bruges proclaimed that it was midnight. Some, breaking in on those that had first struck the hour, baffled by their difference of tone, the calculation of the sleepy citizen, or racked the head of the invalid, who thought the noise interminable. Others of the balance clocks, whose machinery, though invented in the place, had not gained the precision of those of England at the same period, sent out their sounds many minutes after the earlier ones had ceased, giving the lie to their veracity, or pro-

claiming their own falsehood. In these latter, however, anxious lovers, who had stolen to their rendezvous on the earliest summons of the first, wished to repose their faith ; listened with eager ear for the footsteps, or the opening lattice of their mistresses, and disowned the premature sounds that had thrown reproaches on their punctuality. Faint tollings from the bells of those monasteries where midnight mass was performed, roused up the Cenobite brothers to their drowsy orisons. The clatter of arms, and the tramping of harnessed men told that the patroles and guards were on the alert ; while, mingling with all, the carillons chimed from the stadt-house towers, bidding defiance at once to harmony and time.

Such were the only sounds that were to be heard, for no motive but the two most powerful of all,—love and piety, could induce the inhabitants openly to brave the governor's commands that all were to be in bed two hours before that time. Such were the orders proclaimed by beat of drum and blast of trumpet, almost

immediately after Don Juan had so abruptly quitted Rozenhoed House. In a short time the streets were cleared; and the thousands who gazed at the external brilliancy of the burgomaster's fête, were hurried to their homes at the point of the pike, overpowered with astonishment at this breach of the tranquillity which had so long reigned in the city. In the very face of an order of things so outrageous and insulting, Van Rozenhoed and his friends found it impossible to keep up the mockery of pleasure or indifference. The dancing was abandoned almost as soon as commenced, the supper, so splendidly prepared, was scarcely tasted; and the chief part of the guests, chafing with disappointment and anger, sullenly withdrew. Long before the calculated time the lights disappeared in Rozenhoed House; the external illuminations were extinct; and instead of the broad blaze that had lighted up its immediate neighbourhood, all was surrounding darkness, save the glimmer of a couple of lamps which streamed from the turrets, and

quivered like blades of fire deep in the waters of the basin.

In a private parlour, which communicated with the suite of banquetting rooms, and also by a narrow staircase with the apprentice's turret, Van Rozenhoed now sat in close conference with two persons widely contrasted in mental and bodily distinctions, but equally interested in the subjects discussed, and ardent in the pursuit of the objects they embraced. These two persons were Wolfert, Prior of St. Andrew's, and Cornelis Vandergobble, Theresa's nominal suitor, but in fact the secret ambassador from the patriot citizens of Antwerp to those of the same party in Bruges, for the purpose of organizing a simultaneous revolt, in support of the grand plan of operations then on the point of execution by Prince Maurice and the States General of Holland.

As soon as the violent conduct of Don Juan de Trovaldo had broken up the night's festivities and dispersed the company, Van Rozenhoed, in his quality of Burgomaster, had assem-

bled most of the other authorities of the place in one of the salons of his house ; and there, amidst floral decorations and emblems of mere pleasure, a civic council was held on grave matters of constitutional debate. Eschevins, syndics, and greffiers pondered with their chief magistrate on rights and privileges, statutes and prescripts ; and two or three hours were consumed in the discussion of the measures best to be pursued. It was finally agreed that a magisterial remonstrance should be instantly forwarded to the governor by the hands of the chief eschevin, complaining of the flagrant breach of the city privileges by the arrest of Renault Claassen, a free burgher ; and of those of the Franc (a large district without the walls, governed by its own officers), by that of the Syndic Zannekin, on the mere verbal order of Don Juan, unbacked by the warrant of the Burgomaster, signed by his hand and stamped with the city seal, as stipulated in the declaration of rights, granted last by Philip the good Count of Flandres in 1437, and acknowledged

and confirmed by every successive sovereign, including the present archdukes. The proclamation by drum and trumpet was also complained of as a serious grief; and the consequent attaint against the public liberty, insisted on as utterly intolerable.

Independent of this, a formal complaint was agreed to be, in due form, indited against the tyrannous doings of the governor; and it was determined to have this carried and laid at the feet of the archducal throne with all possible solemnity, by a deputation consisting of Van Rozenhoed, as chief Burgomaster, and several of the official persons and principal citizens, whose political feelings made them anxious to profit by this crisis for the furtherance of the good cause. The preliminary heads of this important proceeding being agreed on, its final arrangement was adjourned till the morrow; the eschevin was despatched, with a due escort of the city halberdiers, arquebusiers, and all the requisite formalities of corporation etiquette; and then it was that Van Rozenhoed

retired into the secrecy of his private room, where he found his confidential co-operator the Prior, with Vandergobble, who had there taken refuge, anxiously waiting his coming, for the deliberation of still more momentous matters than those already noticed.

“Well, well, my son, does not all this look well? Could our fierce Don, with all his obstinacy, have built a wall more solid against which to knock his head?” exclaimed the Prior, as Van Rozenhoed entered.

“Heaven and St. Andrew be praised!” replied the Burgomaster, “the furious bravo has overshot his mark. We have now plain reason on our side, as well as just cause for revolt. The whole world will applaud and uphold us. But I dread the outrages that this tyrant governor may inflict on our imprisoned fellow citizens. Poor young Claassen—”

“What of him, my friend? you fear he will escape, do you mean? St. Andrew forbid! No, let Don Juan rather cast him into his deepest dungeon! Well would it be for the

city that so little worth an individual perished, to confirm her cause of complaint."

"Perished, holy father! Please Heaven our cause needs not such a sacrifice! The poor lad! You make me shudder—some instant step must be taken to save him—I will myself hasten to the Stadt-house."

"What would you do? Is this Siger Van Rozenhoed? the chief Burgomaster of one of the first cities of Flanders? Would you lay your dignity and that of your office, of your very city, at the feet of this Spanish satrap? Bethink you of the cause at stake, not of a heretic tanner such as this. Would you have young Renault for your son-in-law? Were *you* alone blind to the look that Theresa gave him in return for his offer to night—did *your* ear only refuse to listen to her sigh?"

As the Prior asked the first of these questions, he caught the retreating burgomaster by the arm; pressed it closely as he continued, and whispered the latter interrogatories, with an emphasis that was meant to sound

deeper than on the tympanum. He did not miscalculate its effects. Van Rozenhoed shrank back from the insinuation, as we have seen him once before do, as though it contained the serpent's sting and cunning both.

“Come, my old and tried friend,” continued the Prior, “let us be men on this occasion; we are entering on a serious game, and we must play it boldly. Think you that Flanders may be freed without the loss of lives? Trust me, good Siger, that a few victims to this governor and his like, are worth as many hundreds lost in battle. The axe that might strike off young Claassen's head, would ring an echo in the heart of every citizen of Bruges, and rouse them to fury. He were well out of the way.”

The burgomaster, with a strict sense of justice and a kind heart, was nevertheless but a burgomaster; and being made of the same sort of stuff with other masterpieces of humanity, was subject to the same frailties as they. He therefore listened more calmly to the Prior's reasoning; and a notion flashed across him that

even if young Renault did not choose to plunge into the gulf, and save the city, he might be conscientiously shoved into it by others. This was a passing idea, the mere wind of the arrow shot by the Prior's skilful hand. It had not acquired the consistency of thought ; nor must we do Van Rozenhoed injustice by prematurely saying that he would ever act on the suggestion. Without any pause that might betray the effect of the Prior's words, he said,

“ Then our respectable friend the Syndic of the Franc ?—can we abandon him ? and if evil befall him, who may serve us in his stead, to transcribe our secret resolutions and regulate our correspondence ? ”

“ Be satisfied on that point too, my friend : ready hands and clear heads are never wanting in a good cause. You have within call this moment, aye, within reach, as trusty and able a clerk as Nicholas Zannekin, and one with youth, spirit, and energy withal, to aid us in the most perilous emergency,—one worth a dozen such syndics.”

Van Rozenhoed looked incredulously round ; and he could scarce repress a smile, despite his anxiety, when his eye fell on Vandergobble, who had sat silently during the colloquy, his elbows resting on the table, his chin supported on his palms ; his lengthy countenance looking a living antithesis to the moral qualities vaunted by the Prior, and every visible portion of his frame proving its unsuitableness to the picture so spiritedly sketched.

“ You doubt me, or think I palter with you, my good friend. Put my recommendation to the test—open yon door, and call your apprentice, and you will find *him* all I have described.”

Again did Van Rozenhoed start at the Prior's words. “ Youth, spirit, energy,” mentally repeated he ; and he asked himself if these were the qualities most prominent in Father Wolfert's recommendation of his nephew, the evening of his introduction ? But there was no time now for qualms, and it was not the season for questions. He was

embarked and committed every way, public and domestic, and he felt the Prior's influence over him to be more than ever in the ascendant. He did not, however, immediately follow his suggestion, but replied to it by asking if it would be prudent to trust an inexperienced boy with matters of such moment as they had in hand ?

“Most surely,” answered the Prior, “for instruments to act with, always choose among the young. Honour makes them faithful; pride zealous; and hope persevering. Selfishness does not tempt, nor misanthropy chill them. These are the vices of age, (Heaven guard us from them !) and Zannekin touches on its limits. Lambert Boonen will make a better secretary and more useful agent.”

“But some preparation will be required to teach the boy his duty,” suggested Van Rozenhoed.

“He could teach us, my friend ! he has nought to learn, believe me. I know nothing of our negociation with the States that is not

known to him. Nay, start not—there's no danger in the boy. His whole soul is in our cause."

"Reverend Father, you know how I honour your wisdom ; nor can I longer doubt the fitness of this young man for all we may entrust to him ! 'Twas Lambert no doubt who warned your reverence of these indications in my daughter's looks, alluded to just now !"

"It was, it was, my friend. The lad's a keen observer ; and he has the honour of your house already too much at heart not to mark and make known to me so evident a sign of its danger. He overcame his dislike to gaiety and pleasure, commonly so called, and looked in upon the splendour of your fête, just long enough to see what all observed but you."

"Had his eyes no other object? Did nought save Theresa's looks and sighs attract his observation ?" asked the Burgomaster, with an ill concealed suspicion in his tone.

"Aye, that there did, Mynheer Van Rozenhoed. The insults of our despot governor,

the daring of that strange baron who made De Bassenvelt's name a cloak for his own designs, did not escape the inmate of your turret. He glows with indignation to see you thus abused in your own and your daughter's person, and would joyfully be champion to you both, to punish those who do you wrong. As I landed from my boat and paced your garden walks two hours gone, the youth recounted all that had passed, and proved himself worthy of your patronage, and sensible of the honour it confers."

"Indeed the youth has shewn himself in this, all that may be approved," said the Burgomaster, alive to his cassocked friend's way of putting the matter.

"I tell you, my good friend," rejoined the Prior, "he may in such times as open on us now, be trusted to the very core ; cherish him once more I tell you. You may need so true, so staunch a follower."

"Does your reverence, then, counsel my calling the youth from his slumber to assist our

conference now? So vouched for by you, I am willing to place my whole trust in him; and worthy Mynheer Vandergobble knows too well your reverence's sagacity, to have scruples on the score of risk, I am sure."

This last assertion, interrogatively put, was answered by a profound nod of the head, which implied assent on the part of the Antwerp deputy. The Prior replied,

"Call, call the boy, my worthy, yet somewhat over cautious friend, nor fear that he sleeps. I have warned him that he should be wanted. And look ye through the crevice of this lattice here; see if his lamp be not burning; nor suppose he winks an eye or nods while he waits my bidding or your service."

The Burgomaster applied his eye to the crevice, and peeping first in the direction of the apprentice's turret, then instantly turning his look towards the other, he exclaimed briskly,

"I see the light—and by the mass! asking pardon of your reverence and St. Andrew, a twin gleam is shooting from Theresa's chamber,

and mingling with the other in the water's surface—"

"A good omen, my old, my excellent friend!" said the Prior. "May the lights of thy house and the stars of thy fortune ever blend together in mild conjunction, and shine reflected in thy prosperity and happiness!"

"Amen!" murmured Vandergobble, with the responsive readiness and well assumed seriousness of a keen diplomatist, as the Prior raised his hands in accompaniment with the blessing which seemed to burst spontaneously from his lips. Van Rozenhoed imagined no meaning in the allusions it contained, but such as his superstition-tinctured mind was always ready to draw from good or evil signs, connected with his veneration for the church, and his uneducated hankering after the sublime absurdities of astrology and magic.

"A benediction from your reverence's lips sounds like the warranty of Heaven, even as of old it spoke its will through the voices of the apostles and the saints;" solemnly exclaimed

he, as he bowed low to the priest who had thus worked on his long-studied weaknesses ; and he added in a livelier tone, “nor will I reject the inference your clear sightedness draws from this accidental analogy of mean things with high. I take this union of lights as a sign of success in our great cause ; and your nephew’s fortunes shall join with mine, even as the beams of his lamp mingle unconsciously with those of my daughter’s. I promise this to your reverence—my faith is pledged—and it shall be the youth’s fault, not mine, if his fate be untoward.”

“Trust him, trust him !” exclaimed the Prior, in unconcealed delight. “I know the value of that pledge, Van Rozenhoed ; it is enough. Now then, let Lambert join us.”

The Burgomaster opened the low door which led to the turret stair, ascended it about half way, and in a tone more fatherly than magisterial, he said,

“Master Boonen,—Lambert, my lad, you are called for. His reverence your uncle, and your

friend Siger Van Rozenhoed, await your presence in the parlour below. Haste you, haste you,—matter of moment requires your aid.”

The Burgomaster returned to his fellow counsellors, followed by his apprentice, whose active foot trod close on his master's heavy step.

“A ready and quick-eared youth, by St. Andrew,” cried Van Rozenhoed, as he looked round and saw the apprentice at his heels. “Come in, Lambert. Thy right reverend relative and patron has informed me and our valued friend here, the ex-Burgomaster of Antwerp, that thou art not ignorant of what is known but to few. Thy young shoulders may carry an old head, and truly methinks that skull-cap of thine promises a store of wisdom. A crop of perfumed curls may better suit our Flanders fops; but some heads produce hair and others brains, my good Lambert; and thine is of the latter mould, or much I marvel. Now, my respected friend, and Reverend Prior, what have we first to touch on? The local subjects

of the city's rights are well got through. The eschevin has ere this delivered our protest to the governor. To-morrow will see our remonstrance fully fashioned and fit to be sent forth. But now more momentous matter is on hand. Mynheer Vandergobble, what have you to unfold in behalf of the good town you here represent? In what is our co-operation to be made most effectual? When are we to communicate with the deputy from the States, whose arrival in Bruges you this evening announced to me? His reverence and myself anxiously wish to enter on these questions."

"Brother Rozenhoed, I have hearkened attentively to all that has lately passed between yourself and his reverence here. I am confident in the faith of all I now see and hear. But much it wonders me that one essential preliminary to our conference has been overlooked—the *primum mobile* of all that leads to good. You have not, it would seem, commanded supper to be forthcoming?"

"By St. Andrew, and I had quite for-

gotten it !” replied the Burgomaster to this reproach. “ My brain has been so busy with this night’s disturbance, that verily it has not had time to think of the stomach. But we shall be soon provided with wherewithal to meet your wishes and wants, respected friend. The brutal conduct of our governor, in spoiling a feast, has at least secured us from fasting.”

The Burgomaster then stepped to the door of the parlour, and calling for Jans Broeklaer, his most confidential and trusty domestic, he desired him to furnish a repast forthwith, of the rarest preparations made for the uneaten supper.

“ How many covers, may it please your Worshipful Excellency ? Two, I suppose, one for his reverence the Prior, and another for your Excellency’s Worship ?” asked Jans, giving the new magistrate his full measure of respect.

“ Thou art a bad accountant, Jans—four will be required. Master Boonen, the apprentice,

makes one, and Mynheer Vandergobble another."

"I ask your Excellency's pardon," replied the serving man. "I did not know of the young gentleman of the turret being of *such* a party; and I suspected that the larded leveret and the compote of French prunes had satisfied Mynheer's appetite, while your worship and their honors the Eschevins were disputing in the yellow saloon."

"Jans Broeklaer, you have served me long enough to have known the difference between disputation and discussion—but let that pass! I knew not that my Antwerp friend had been so well cared for; and it seems he himself forgets it. But memory keeps a slippery hold, they say, of eaten bread. Four covers, Jans, and quickly!"

As the Burgomaster stepped back into the parlour, he heard Vandergobble finishing a short dissertation on the positive necessity of eating a hearty meal as a prelude to business, his concluding words (being a quotation, as he

said, from John de Heurn, of Utrecht, one of the greatest physicians of the day), sounding to the Burgomaster's ear quite as hollow as the argument they were meant to enforce, and marvellously so, considering the solid supply so lately introduced into the cavities of the speaker's stomach. Van Rozenhoed announced the quick approach of the ready prepared supper ; and his hungry guest then said,

“ Now matters move *ad norman exactus*, and good results may follow. And it is now time to inform you, my worthy and worshipful host, that Mynheer Hans Hoogstraaten, whose arrival in your good town I told you of to-night, is in actual waiting on our leisure, and ready for the call that summons him to our conference.”

“ How's this ?” asked the Burgomaster. “ In waiting ! The worshipful Mynheer Hoogstraaten of the Hague, the licenced and accredited agent of the States General of Holland, to the secret confederation of Flanders and Brabant, in waiting, like a common varlet ! Forget

you the danger of any one being unhoused, in opposition to the arbitrary proclamation of our misgoverning governor? Let me fly to give him entrance!"

"Save yourself all trouble and anxiety on that score, mine host—my Dutch friend is safe lodged above in Master Boonen's chamber. While you conferred with the authorities within, he came here in his reverence's boat, and took his place in the turret."

"What! then your reverence knew of Mynheer Hoogstraaten's being here; and you, too, Master Boonen! Verily, it seems that Siger Van Rozenhoed, the first magistrate of Bruges, is but the lowest person in his own house—me-thinks ——"

"Nay, nay, my ever excellent friend," interrupted the prior, in a tone of coaxing authority, which the burgomaster never could resist, "be not unreasonably offended for a seeming liberty taken with you. The safety of us all required secrecy to the movements of the distinguished stranger; and could we have

called you from your conference to tell his coming, and so betray both ourselves, and him, and you? This must not be, although it proceeds from the proud sensitiveness natural to high station," or, he might have added, from the painful solicitude inseparable from low birth.

But the burgomaster was appeased, and at the same time pleased, and he forthwith mounted the turret stairs, a lamp in his hand, to conduct to the parlour the truly important personage we have now to introduce to our readers; and he was speedily heard on his return, and spoke as he descended—

“ This way, this way, Mynheer; the stair is somewhat narrow, and turns sharp by this oriel window; but every step is smooth and safe, being individually placed under the eyes of my old friend Van Block himself, chief architect of our town, and master of the worshipful Company of Masons, Stone-cutters, Bricklayers, and builders. Every square inch in my house, from garret to cellar, is as

sound and sure as though the respected architect had sworn to the goodness of the materials, like Jean Ruysbroek, the constructor of the Stadt House at Brussels, whose oath is to be seen registered in the city archives."

"In good truth, Mynheer," answered the stranger, "your mansion is, as far as I can judge, worthy of the station of its owner and the reputation of its architect. *He* had no need to hang himself when his work was finished, as vulgar belief assures us Jean Ruysbroek did."

"Now, Mynheer, three steps more," resumed Van Rozenhoed, "that is the last. Your Excellency is heartily welcome to Bruges, and to my poor habitation. Witness my hand, which I offer to you, in our true Flemish fashion, with the heart in its palm!"

The stranger, as he entered the parlour, accepted and returned the cordial shake of the burgomaster's fist, promptly remarking his grand failing; although we hope, for the sake of Van Rozenhoed, that he was not

disposed, like a witty satirist of two centuries later, to believe that—

“ The sin which the devil likes best
Is the pride that apes humility.”

The stranger smiled and nodded familiarly to the three other associates, who all rose as he entered ; and he stepped forward towards the table with an air of authority that seemed suited to the place of honour, had there been such. The burgomaster came close to him for the purpose of offering a seat ; but he literally seemed to stand on no ceremony for he quietly took possession of the large stuffed chair, covered with purple morocco leather, which was usually considered sacred for the use of the burgomaster himself. Van Rozenhoed, always as prone to yield to an assumption of authority as to put forward his own when no competition existed, took an unarmed chair, which, however, held its back as high as the best, and placed himself beside

the table, where the prior, the apprentice, and Vandergobble had seated themselves, on a signal from the more important personage whose precedence they implicitly admitted.

CHAPTER V.

THE stranger looked, with the exception of the apprentice, the youngest of the party. Yet he took as his own the evident lead of all, with no forced or offensive presumption, but with a matter-of-course carelessness, which even high talent, unallied with high birth, can rarely adopt over age. He was in appearance scarce five and thirty. His complexion was of the best kind of Dutch,—fair and florid. His forehead was high and broad, and not thickly covered with light brown hair; but this inclination to baldness betrayed no wrinkle on his front, nor

did any lines appear on his cheeks, beyond the verge of his mustachios and formally cut beard, except the seamed mark left in one of them by a bullet wound. His light blue eyes looked clear and intelligent, but they were not of that kind which seem to penetrate the minds of those they gaze on, and turn back the prying glance that would read their secrets. They rather expressed a free and frank intrepidity, and accorded with the air of open-browed courage, which seemed to stamp the stranger more of a soldier than a statesman. His whole bearing was decidedly martial, yet his dress bespoke a wealthy, but by no means an elegant civilian. It was not of the ludicrous fashion, or flagrant bad taste of Vandergobble's. It was plain and of fine materials. But the burgomaster thought, as he keenly eyed the wearer, sitting so much at ease in his own arm chair, that his kersey suit might have been more characteristically supplied by a buff doublet, or covered with a coat of mail. Having a considerable respect for the profession of arms, the chief

road to distinction in those times of warfare, Van Rozenhoed was not the less disposed to give his newly introduced acquaintance every possible share of attention and respect.

Jans Broeklaer now appeared, and set busily to work making preparations for the supper table, first whispering in his master's ear, "Five covers, I suppose, your worship?" for he was a matter-of-fact fellow, who did nothing without orders.

"Certainly," replied the burgomaster, who liked his servant the better for having no opinion of his own.

"So, so; we are to discuss our business with our supper, it seems," said Mynheer Hoogstraaten gaily; "a good plan, by Saint George! I am marvellously willing and ready too. Your bustling town, Mynheer Van Rozenhoed, and the worthy prior's quiet cloister, have been alike unfavourable to the indulgence of gross appetite, such as I plead guilty to. I have been half famished in the midst of plenty, and find no great relish in this

service of ambuscade. But we must do our duty, gentlemen, whether in the field or the trenches, in the open plain, or in the covered way."

Van Rozenhoed was confirmed in his notion as to his new guest's calling, by this soldier-like phraseology; and his confidence in him, and the cause he had embarked in, rose even higher than before.

"Sir," replied he, "your chivalric bearing glads my heart. I am happy to see their High Mightinesses the States of Holland represented by one, who, if my feeble judgment deceive me not, could wield a rapier in their cause, and wag a tongue in their councils, who could fight as well as negotiate."

"In truth, my worthy magistrate, I have borne some blows in their service, and am more familiar with swords than words," said Mynheer Hoogstraaten, with a look that showed no displeasure at the burgomaster's conjecture, at once true and flattering. "But we have now to talk. The season for action is fast

coming; and we must first confer and calculate with our friends, as to means and appliances. All the science of your townsman, Simon Stephen,* would be required to compute the chances of the stroke we shall presently have to hazard. Before Holland can move to liberate Flanders, she must learn what Flanders will do towards her freedom. It is from the mouths of the chief men of your cities, your patriot magistrates, your clear-sighted divines, men who will sacrifice party feeling and prejudice, worldly wealth and sectarian scruples, to forward the great cause of liberty; whose deeds will become the echo of their words, and whose names are the pledges of integrity, like some which I am not courtier enough to pronounce in this presence."

There was, notwithstanding, plain evidence in this speech that the speaker knew somewhat of courts as well as camps; and that if his trade was to break men's heads, he had also studied what they held inside.

* The inventor of decimal arithmetic, about this period.

Van Rozenhoed, Vandergobble, and the prior, all made an involuntary acknowledgment of the compliment. The apprentice, by his immobility, seemed to think he had no title to take a share of it to himself.

“We hope, at least,” said the burgomaster, “that Bruges will not be found wanting when the day of trial comes. We are strong in numbers, depend on it, but stronger still in inclination. The stout arms of our artizans will be ready as of old, when they handled their pikes for freedom’s sake, and made the name of our town the watchword of valour.”

“Bravely spoken, by Saint George! and well you would bear your own part when the day of trial came, I warrant me! Your hand, once more, Mynheer Van Rozenhoed. I longed to see you, and judge if fame had been only the pander to wealth; but I am now satisfied you *are* the man the world believes you. But here comes your varlet with the supper. As you trust him, he is, no doubt, trust worthy. But I prithee let him withdraw when the viands are

placed ; for I have short time for discourse, and we must be our own servitors, and talk and eat together. The worthy prior will bless our meal and our converse, at one and the same time ; and you'll find my worthy friend Vandergobble and myself, though but a couple of heretics, will prove right catholic in respect to all which covers the board."

Vandergobble looked a hungry confirmation of this voucher ; and prepared to give it proof, when a few minutes had sufficed to place the well-covered table which Jans Broeklaer had arranged apart from that at which the foregoing conversation took place. The party was soon in full employment. The burgomaster took his proper station at the head of the table, the Dutch deputy on his right hand, and occupying one side ; the prior and Vandergobble taking their places opposite ; and the apprentice the stool at foot, by the side of his master. Thus placed, the business of the board went on ; and Hoogstraaten, amply partaking of its cheer, discoursed the while.

“ Mynheer Van Rozenhoed, and you, reverend Prior, the sooner I enter on plain matters of fact the better for us all. My time is short, and yours valuable. My commission to treat with ye, as the most influential patriots of Bruges, is in the pocket of my doublet here. The ex-burgomaster of Antwerp knows my powers, and has seen me act on them. The capability of this town is great. The reward for its exertion should be proportionate. To you, reverend Prior, I am authorized sacredly to promise the bishopric, with its hereditary accompaniment of Chancellor of Flanders, as soon as the city declares itself free from the Spanish dominion.” The Prior bowed and said—

“ I accept, with gratitude, through such a distinguished source, this solemn confirmation of former offers ; the liberty of the country is the great object of my vows, and wholly employs my worldly anxieties, for its accomplishment must be grateful to Heaven. If I may be nominated by the States to fill the episcopal

chair, I shall accept the honour with humility, and at the same time with reluctance, convinced of my incompetency," and the Prior might here perhaps have added some form of protest equivalent to our existing *Nolo Episcopari*, had not the Dutch deputy cut short his discourse.

"Well said, in all points, my reverend father: we understand each other fully. And now for you, my generous host, for that you are so, even to overflowing, I am not now to learn, *we do not* fully understand each other, but we shall soon do so. On your part you will have, as speedily as may be, to prepare for me a strict and not exaggerated list of such burghers of the city and liberties as you can reckon on to aid our purposes. No dubious name must enter into it. All must be sure, and staunch, and ready—for the day of action is at hand. I would not cause you embarrassment, or rather let me speak it plainer, risk, for such there would be had you to sound or tamper with (excuse the word) the dispositions

of the doubtful citizens. You will not, therefore, compromise yourself by interference with those of other creeds than your own. His reverence here and you must only deal with the Catholic patriots. For the Calvinists and others of the reformed sects, we do not want assistance. I stand well with some of their chiefs, and can count on them to a man."

"I hope so," said Van Rozenhoed, with an incredulous shake of the head; "but, religious views apart, Mynheer, I doubt the purity of many among them. I fear me that our loudest brawlers among the patriot Protestants are only anxious to follow the example of the arch-traitor Hembyse, at Ghent, and seize on power for their own ends, making reform the cloak for their treachery."

"Like him, then, may such, if they do exist, meet the fate of treachery, and die as traitors ought! but I hope better from the men of Bruges. With the warning before them of a bad example like Hembyse, and a good one

like Van Rozenhoed, none will, I trust, be found to play false to his country, and prefer infamy to honour."

The burgomaster silently shook his head, and the prior looked his dissent as well; but they both forbore to support the opinion by words, for they could not, in the presence of the two Protestant deputies, speak as they felt against Claas Claassen, and the others to whom Van Rozenhoed had alluded.

Hoogstraaten, after a short pause, continued, "I grieve to see distrust on your brows, my friends, although your tongues, from delicacy no doubt, forbear to urge your scruples further. I am no prophet, and least of all of ill. But Heaven grant that our most righteous cause and our best efforts fail not from party dissensions! If Faction raise her head, adieu to Freedom! Then, indeed, will your weakness be the oppressor's strength. My mind rejects evil boding thoughts, unless they are forced too strongly on me for resistance; but in

these sad symptoms of internal mistrust I see a multitude of ills. When, oh when, will Heaven in its bounty grant peace to these distracted countries? Is the wisdom of one portion to be as chaff scattered before the winds in the eyes of the rest? Is blood to flow for ever, and yet not suffice to wash away the stubbornness which men throw before their own enfranchisement? Excuse me, reverend Sir, and you my worthy host: when the heart is in a cause the tongue will not be tied. I am ready to shed my life-blood for the deliverance of Flanders, as I have long and often risked it to maintain the independence of Holland. But if I see disunion and distrust, like foul weeds, choking the scion of liberty which I am now here for the purpose of planting, I may only offer myself a sacrifice, without obtaining any end."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the prior; and the apprentice looked as if he were ready to

burst with the impatient wish to speak, but durst not.

Van der Gobble never ceased to eat during his Dutch friend's animated harangue ; and the burgomaster felt at once astonished and abashed at the so evidently heartfelt and so authoritative energy of this stranger's rebuke. But what most surprised him was, the passive air with which the haughty prior yielded the palm to a mere agent from the states, whose name was one unheard of till that moment,—a heretic, as he himself professed, and with no apparent claim to supremacy over those around him, but his high toned zeal and his fearless contempt of danger in so perilous a mission.

“ I have said enough, not too much, I trust, on this topic of internal feuds,” resumed Hoogstraaten, after a pause, in which he seemed to wait for a reply, but received none. “ To your own good sense and to the will of Providence I leave your city dissensions. With

those of my own sect, the family of Claassen, for example, I will urge still stronger argument. But now let me hasten to the closing scene of this night's performance, first pledging you all in a flowing cup. Your wine, worthy burgo-master, your wine is of prime flavour. The odious Spaniards at least do some good, as the worst wind blows it to some one or another, in bringing you this choice produce of their vineyards. But a glass of water from the spring-head of Liberty, is worth tons of Malaga or Xeres, from the stores of a tyrant."

It was evident that the deputy added this last sentiment, to efface the impression of the former one, which his love of good cheer had extorted from him.

"Still," said Van Rozenhoed, with a smile, "we must not reject the wine, Mynheer; on the contrary, fill a bumper, all of us, from this flask of Muscadine. It is as rare a growth, though I say it, as ever was shipped from the quay of Cadiz; and let us drink to the health of

their high mightinesses the States General, with the noble Prince Maurice at their head ; coupled with this assurance, on the faith of a cordial pledge, that Siger Van Rozenhoed knows nothing of factious feeling or religious feuds ; that a true son of the Catholic church, he trusts his own soul in its pale, but meddles not with those that are beyond it—acknowledges no distinctions but virtue and patriotism—wishes to all men an equal share in the rights which the state should give to all—and considers that citizen as his dearest friend who does the most to serve his country. This is the best reply I can give to your severe, but not merited, rebuke, Mynheer. But let the reply alone be on record, and that which provoked it be washed out of memory by our wine.”

He quaffed off his glass, and the others followed his example. Then Hoogstraaten rose, and with a look still loftier, and an air, if possible, more candid than before, he said,

“ Mynheer Van Rozenhoed, on the faith of a true man, and a soldier, I believe your words and honour you for your sentiments. Would to Heaven that all Flemings felt and thought like you ! Then liberty and happiness would be to them realities, not shadows ; nor their native plains and cities an arena for the prize fighters of Europe. Let us hope and pray for better days, which I believe, in my heart, ye are about to see. For your kindly pledge to the honour of the States, I thank you in their name ; and for that to Prince Maurice, I thank you in—— my own.”

“ How ? what ? Prince Maurice ? In *your own* ! Why what is this ? I am utterly bewildered. Father Wolfert—Mynheer Van der Gobble—Master Boonen—what does this mean ?—Is it possible—”

“ That Maurice of Nassau has had the honour of supping with the wealthy and worthy citizen, Siger Van Rozenhoed !” exclaimed the Dutch deputy, filling up the sentence in his

own fashion, and once more stretching forth his hand for the burgomaster's acceptance, while the latter shrunk from its touch—"It is possible—it is *true*. I am indeed none other—and you will pardon me, and hold guiltless our friends here, if I have reserved to myself the pleasure of making my own introduction in my own way. Do not refuse my hand. You have accepted it, nobly and generously, before now, when offered to you even under the same title."

At these words, the burgomaster, who had looked quite astounded, seemed revived by some electric recollection. He instantly caught the meaning of the prince's allusion; and starting suddenly up, he proceeded without uttering a word to open a curiously-carved writing desk, in which he had for years deposited his most important papers. In a minute or two he discovered that for which he sought; and returning towards the table, where his guests all sat watching his movements

with no little surprise, he deliberately produced a small scroll, on which was written an obligation for payment of the sum of fifty thousand florins with interest, to Siger Van Rozenhoed, and signed “Maurice of Nassau.” This document, after having let his guests peruse it, the burgomaster thrust into the flame of the wax-taper beside him. In a moment it curled up between his finger and thumb, and, catching the blaze, it was blown away by his breath, a black and scarcely tangible remnant of the solid value it had represented but an instant before.

“Thus be the honour purchased—aye, and at too cheap a price, of having entertained at my board the greatest hero of the age, the son of the immortal deliverer of his country, himself the consummator of the glorious work his sire began! The debt is cancelled for ever! But not all the tapers of the earth could burn out the record that will henceforth celebrate my name. I have already considered

this day the proudest of my life—but what has been reserved as its crowning distinction! Honour be for ever on the walls so honoured—and may after ages look upon their crumbling ruins, and say—This is the spot where Maurice the hero supped with Siger the gold-beater!”

The first hour that followed this scene, was one of lively and animated discussion. The burgomaster recovered from his surprise, calmed his enthusiasm, and indulged his delight, in listening to the gallant communications of the prince, carried away by his off-hand eloquence into a fervid sympathy with all he said. Plans were sketched for organization among the various trades, and the several cities of the coalition; and Maurice proved himself, in short, to possess method, as well as enterprise, and sagacity as well as courage. The prior took an active part in the conversation. Van der Gobble said little, but ate much; but when he either spoke or ate, his tongue, as well as his teeth, was

employed to the purpose. The apprentice acted as secretary with alacrity and precision, taking notes, and marking down memorandums at his employer's dictation, with becoming modesty and in total silence.

When these preliminary measures were pretty well finished, the burgomaster, subsiding gradually into a less political and more personal train of thought, felt at intervals an almost undefinable sensation of pleased anxiety, that the prince might turn his inquiries and observations from public concerns, and speak more of Van Rozenhoed's own. He remembered the sudden light that seemed to flash before his mind, when, in a former conversation, the prior mentioned the probability of Prince Maurice coming to Bruges. But that was in allusion to his entry as a conqueror, at the head of an army. Now he had come, but with all the privacy and risk of an individual actuated by some strong personal motive. Van Rozenhoed was a patriot, and he had most elevated notions

of Prince Maurice's character. He believed him capable of any effort or sacrifice for the country's good ; but his general knowledge of mankind, gave him a notion that personal interest was the main-spring of human motives ; and *his own*, even at the moment, and unknown to himself, led him to think, or hope, or imagine—he scarcely knew which to call it—that the Stadtholder, High Admiral, and Generalissimo of Holland, was not in his house that night, without some unexplained object relating to its inmates. His surprise, great as it was, was therefore overwhelmed in absolute delight, when the prince rather abruptly turned from the subject of their discussions, and said,

“ This, gentlemen, is enough. All is now done, that present circumstances permit of our doing. The foundation stone is laid, whereon to build the fabric of your own glory, and this city's greatness. I must now bestir myself for my departure, trusting to your management to pass me safely through the gates. I have

no time to dally—I must hasten to co-operate with the patriots of Brabant, and throw myself among those Spanish and Italian mutineers, whose intentions are yet doubtful. I shall not sleep till I confront the garrison of Saint Andrew, and gain them on any terms to our side. With this vital object before me, I must not linger on my way. Let me then briefly say to you, Mynheer Van Rozenhoed, that infinite as was the importance of my mission here, assuring myself of the men we had to act with, and the means they could command, I had perhaps postponed my visit, had not a powerful private motive urged me on. That motive,” continued Maurice (while the burgomaster felt as if his brain danced, and as though his breath was nearly gone) “was friendship. I have many whom I believe to be staunch friends—many whom I would serve at any risk ; and among them *one* whom I am now acting for. I am, in short, about to throw my private interest with you into the scale with the great

personal and public merits of a valued and valiant youth, who has this night entered the list of competition with the suitors for your daughter's hand."

The burgomaster's heart, that had felt as if mounting his throat with the velocity of a cannon ball shot up towards the sky, seemed to flop heavily down into his breast again, like the iron globe falling back on the earth. But this operation seemed at once to clear his head. He recovered his sight and breath, and saw things as they were. The visioned possibility of Maurice coming to sue for himself vanished like a meteor flash ; and Van Rozenhoed had no doubt but young Arnoul de Grimberghe, the new chamberlain, was the object of his prince's solicitude. Before he could make any reply to what had been offered by the latter, he was struck momentarily dumb again as Maurice continued :

"In one word, I come to back the suit of Count Ivon de Bassenvelt."

The burgomaster involuntarily started. He looked on the prince, then on the prior and the apprentice. In the faces of the two latter he saw an expression of anxiety that he had no time to analyse. The whole was instantaneous; and the impressions on Van Rozenhoed's mind were hurried and confused. No one seemed to have the power or inclination to aid him. He at length exclaimed,

“Count Ivon de Bassenvelt!”

“Yes,” said Maurice, “the most promising youth of Brabant—the most gallant, the most disinterested of its nobles—the first man to shake off tyranny, and raise the standard of freedom.”

“Does your Highness know of his late sacrilege?” asked Van Rozenhoed—but faintly, as though the picture of his patriotism had lessened the effect of his offence.

“I know of his risking danger and death to save from a convent's gloom a poor victim of your governor's villainy. But I know more

than that, Mynheer. I know that he adores your daughter, and that he is worthy of her hand, or may I perish if I would blot my scutcheon by the infamy of recommending him to you."

Van Rozenhoed was evidently moved by the warmth of the prince's manner, and tolerant towards the laxity of his morals. He looked again around him, but no eye met his to aid him with even the silent support of a glance. He hesitated awhile, and then said,

"Prince Maurice, you have touched me on the tenderest point. The happiness of my child weighs with me more than all the world beside. I must be neutral in this question. I have vowed as much. She shall choose for herself; and, honouring your Highness as I do, and proud as I am of your interference in this matter, I cannot still say more than that my child shall choose for herself. I firmly believe that nothing can overcome her disgust

to the name of De Bassenvelt. An outrage to her pure and powerful sense of delicacy has been done her by the seducer of her convent companion; and I think, and hope, she will never accept a man whom her heart does not approve. If Count Ivon can conquer her's, and overcome her repugnance, *my* consent is here pledged to your Highness. I can say no more."

"I ask no more, my truly worthy and high minded friend, for such your sentiments make me proud to call you. I answer for Count Ivon. He knows the sex, and I warrant you he will find time and place to establish himself in your daughter's heart. I only trust he may have *fair play*, for he has many difficulties to surmount. Yet tell the fair Theresa from me, and pray let her honour me by accepting this small token of my interest in her happiness, that Maurice of Nassau hopes one day to place her hand in that of his friend Ivon de Bassenvelt, at the altar, where they will be joined

for ever by her old confessor, his reverence the Prior of St. Andrew, who may be, I trust, ere then, his Highness the Bishop of Bruges."

As Prince Maurice spoke, he took a ruby ring of curious construction from his finger, and handed it to Van Rozenhoed. The prior sat silent, and looked down, quite contrary to his usual wont. The apprentice was keenly watched by Van Rozenhoed, as the prince looked at him and laid a strong emphasis on the words, "fair play;" and ere his highness had finished speaking, the young man, unwilling, it would seem, to be so scrutinized, rose from the table, and walked across the room.

Little more was said. The prince and his companion Van der Gobble, after a warm leave-taking of his host, were safely conveyed to the Dominican cloister in the prior's boat, and no accident interrupted their departure from the town, the governor having come to reason on the subject of his proclamation, and

the guards consequently offering no obstruction to the movements of travellers duly furnished with papers of egress or ingress, as those in question were.

In a little more, all was dark and silent throughout Rozenhoed-House.

CHAPTER VI.

PRINCE MAURICE of Nassau, whom we have just introduced to our readers, in one of those perilous enterprises which his intrepid character made common to him, was, at this period, with the exception of Henry IV. of France, the most distinguished man of his age. A parallel, in proper time and place, might well be drawn between the two heroes ; and though the wider and more elevated scene on which Henry acted, and the still greater vicissitudes, and tragical termination of his life, must on

the whole give him the precedence in point of interest over Maurice, we may safely say that the epoch in which the latter is now before us, presented him to the world in an aspect more exciting than that of his great contemporary at the time. Henry having ran through the evident risks of his eventful career, and having attained the height of power, was sinking in the splendid sunset of success ; and had just reached the term when faults of character began to become manifest, which the mid-day light of glory had shrouded rather than revealed. Maurice was in the very prime of life, in the vigour of health and energy, yet not at the summit of his fame. He had triumphed over many obstacles, but he was still circled with dangers and difficulties ; and had much to conquer, ere his glorious object—the freedom of his country—was attained. He had been not long before wounded in battle, and had more recently still escaped assassination, that fate which so often sets its bloody seal upon

the patriot's sacrifices, as it had done so lately in the case of his great father, and was so soon to do again in that of his glorious friend, between whom and him we would now trace a likeness though there could exist no rivalry. The faults of Maurice hitherto developed, had been those which the world perhaps too readily excuses, and which individuals, kindly considerate of their own frailty, too easily perhaps forgive. Such faults he shared in common with Henry ; and though the amours of the French monarch were distinguished by romance, while those of the Dutch prince partook of phlegm, these were constitutional distinctions ; and the want of brilliancy in the adventures of Maurice, was amply recompensed by the solid sincerity of his attachments. One, at least, offers a model for that kind of virtue. The severest moralist who has been dazzled by the story of Gabrielle d'Estrées might acknowledge himself edified by that of Gertrude

Van Mechelen. Without touching on ground too delicate and too foreign from our present purpose, we may state that the constancy of Maurice to this lady, whom he seduced in his youth, and was separated from but by death, if it offer a too common picture of human weakness, gives an unusual lesson of princely fidelity. What higher order of faults, in a political view, ambition might in after life have given birth to, it is not the purport of these pages to record. We are not writing the life of Prince Maurice, and have only to deal with that brilliant fragment of it (set like a gem in the transactions of our tale) which began at the time now in question, and hurried rapidly on to that period at which our labours are meant to terminate.

Leaving, therefore, the gallant prince to pursue his important journey towards the fort of St. Andrew, in the Isle of Bommel, accompanied by Van der Gobble, young Arnoul de Grimberghe, and a small band of chosen fol-

lowers, who met him by appointment on the borders of Flanders, we must return awhile to our heroine, and trace the effects produced by a few successive days in her character and prospects in life.

When Theresa, after the final separation of the company retired to her turret, and recovered in a great measure the composure which the circumstances of the evening had so disturbed, she took a rapid review of all that had occurred. But not content with a mere passing recapitulation of events, such as superficial minds can alone accomplish, she considered each in its connexion with the rest, compared their separate effects on each other, as well as their probable consequences to herself, and laboured to form from the whole a combination on which she might act, as well as reason. The faculty of mind which seemed thus so fully called into being, on this first occasion in her life, has been by modern classifiers christened, we believe, *causality*. We

know not if external developments were as evident in those days as in ours ; but for the satisfaction of our too scientific readers, we assert, on the authority of an exquisite portrait, preserved by a connoisseur of Bruges, that no disfiguring bumps protruded on the forehead of our lovely, and yet highly intellectual, heroine.

The result of two hours' reflection, such as we have described, was a strong impression on Theresa's mind, that the scene in which she had just played so prominent a part was one degrading, rather than dignified ; that her father's ambition had led him from the line of real respectability ; and that, in consenting to be the prize of a public exhibition, she had herself paid an unconscious tribute to vanity, at the expense of pride. She felt her cheeks burn as she came to this conclusion ; and she intently vowed that the self-inflicted indignity should be atoned for by a long series of self-retribution. She then mentally recalled each

person who had so lately figured before her ; and by the magic of memory made them act their parts again.

Her different suitors, in look, and mien, and dress, stood up once more for judgment ; and when she had well weighed the claims, and as far as she might judge of them, the character of each, she asked herself, “ And must I choose from among them, or those insipid cowards, who shrunk back from fear, and dared not urge their suit ? They were about ten in all. A fair number for a fair maiden to choose from, no doubt ; but methinks that *one* man to suit me, had reckoned more than all these put together. Which of them could I fix on ? not one of the cowards, certainly ! who then ? That brute Trovaldo ? That careless coxcomb De Grimberghe ? Old Nicholas Zannekin, or the grotesque Van der Gobble ? Heaven forbid that any of those should find the chance of favour in my sight ! That haughty, but so handsome, baron, with his costly attire, his dissimulating

eyes, and sneering smile?—No ! He is at least a traitor, let his friend be ever so base. Renault Claassen, young, good looking, modest, and certainly sincere ? I do believe he loves me—and he alone. That is a mortifying thought. One only seeks me for myself—the others, without exception, woo me for my wealth, or at best are caught by what they are pleased to consider my beauty. But this Claassen, he unquestionably loves me ; and is not true affection worth all the rest ? No—not if allied with mean birth and low connexion ! A tanner's son ! my mother's blood rises again to my brow, at the thought of these affronts. Besides, I know nothing of this youth, whose admiration has made me so forget myself. And is there not a meanness in his way of approaching me—a want of spirit that excites my pity, rather than my sympathy ? I believe I am woman enough to like a humble lover, but not a cringing one. A man should not fawn like a dog. Madame Marguerite's *Fanchon* has positively more

spirit than this young tanner ! No, no, I must not think of him. How different was the bearing of Master Lambert Boonen, when he spoke to me in the bower ? What a superior tone and manner, in spite of his plain and unbecoming dress. I wonder does *he* love me !”

This last thought was quite electrical. The others had been more or less tame and reflective ; this came like a lightning flash. Theresa, who had been seated during her soliloquy on her bedside, started up involuntarily, and looked full at her glass. She covered her face with her hands, seeing it suffused with a deep blush ; and, scarcely knowing what she did, she threw open her little casement, and put her head out into the refreshing air. The night was dark. The lamps of the illumination had all expired ; and as far as Theresa could distinguish, she saw nothing but gloomy masses of buildings, and the tall poplars of the Duyver, standing blackly up along the side of the canal. The casement she looked from did not permit a view of the

corresponding part of Rozenhoed-house, called the Apprentice's Turret; but as Theresa's glances fell upon the basin, she clearly saw the reflection of a lamp, quivering like a living thing of light in the dark water, and she knew it could only come from the window of Lambert Boonen's apartment. She fixed her eyes on this light, as though there were a kind of fascination in it; and quite unconsciously to her, her thoughts seemed to make it a medium of communication with the place whence it emanated. Theresa's soliloquy was thus resumed.

“ Can the youth be still awake and up? How studious he must be, and how musical he is!—what a delicious voice—either in singing or speaking, it really seems to come from his very heart”—(and here she placed her hand on *hers*, and sighed)—“ there is certainly an odd and striking sort of gracefulness about him, that one would be amused at, but for the air of deep feeling mixed with it. What energy in his words to-night—in his manner more than his

words ; and how proudly respectful he looked when I left the bower so abruptly. It was just there, where the light now glimmers, that the boat stood so still a few nights back, when those sweet strains rose up. It must have been his voice—I should distinguish it in a thousand. He does not sing to-night—yet he might see my light, as easily as I see his ! How strange that my father and his uncle should forbid his speaking or looking at me. Yet how bold of him to speak to me in spite of their commands—and he did not seem in the least afraid of me. What can he be doing now ? I wonder if he is thinking of *me*—I will just look from Nona's window over at his turret."

This string of reflections was run over as rapidly, and with about as little consciousness of what they tended to, as a string of beads counted by some superannuated devotee ; and Theresa's last thought, above recorded, was followed by an instant movement from her own bedroom up the half dozen steps that separated

it from the still smaller chamber occupied by her attendant.

Nona, fatigued by the day's bustle, and tired of waiting for her mistress's call, had sunk on her bed "accoutred as she was," and fallen asleep. Theresa was unwilling to disturb her. Perhaps she did not wish (if she thought of it at all) for a witness to her present proceeding; but Nona's bed being placed directly under the small square casement, she found it necessary to step up on it, and across the body of its occupant, to enable her to look out as she intended. There was little fear of her active tread disturbing her handmaid's slumbers, so she placed her foot gently up, and stepped over. Then cautiously opening the lattice, she looked out; but was almost as much terrified as if a ghost had met her view, on seeing the apprentice's face looking from his window full upon hers, and seeming almost close to it, as the light in his chamber produced the illusion of throwing it out into the intervening gloom.

The apprentice and Theresa started in mutual surprise, but his was that of pleasure, hers that of confusion.

He seemed impelled forward—she drew back—and, in this involuntary motion, her foot, delicate as it was, caused Nona to repulse its pressure with a sudden jerk of her whole body, such as an imperfect sleeper gives, on even a slighter interruption. Theresa was half frightened, half ashamed; she dared not move, lest Nona might awake, and catch her in the fact, such as it was. She could not withdraw her head from the window, without knocking it against the wall that imprisoned it, at the only side which allowed of escape; and while she thus stood, feeling her colour come and go in rapid succession, she saw the apprentice acknowledging her presence, by frequent and profound obeisances, having drawn back his head from the window, seemingly to allow of his more freely placing his hand on his breast, which he did, as it appeared to Theresa, with infinite

grace : though her eyes began to swim, as tears, she could not tell from what source, came rushing into them. She was greatly distressed, and her embarrassment became heightened beyond endurance. She plainly distinguished the face of another person start up beside that of the apprentice, and look forward as if to see the object of his attentions. She could bear no more, but turning suddenly round, she sprang across Nona, and on the floor, and quickly darted to her own room, and threw herself on her face on the bed, every limb trembling, and her heart throbbing against the pillow, which she pressed almost convulsively.

This little adventure occupied but a very few minutes. Somewhat more were required to allow of Theresa's recovering from its effects ; and when she did shake off her emotion, and looked bright and clear again, like some beautiful bird shaking the night showers from its wings, she appeared to herself to have gained new strength from the trial she had

by mere thoughtlessness so exposed herself to. She seemed to have read a self-taught lesson ; and in these proofs of our heroine's judgment, we wish to mark how closely its exercise was connected with, and excited by, the natural errors of a youthful mind. She felt her present distress to be a just penance for her vanity and curiosity ; nor was she reconciled to the consciousness of having indulged these failings, by reflecting that they were attributed (how unjustly she knew not) exclusively to her sex. She continued to think on, in this reverie of self-reproach, unmindful of clocks and carillons ; and it was some time after midnight, when she suddenly recollected her having left the casement open, directly over the bed of the sleeping Nona, and the fresh reproach which the recollection conveyed, made her promptly hasten to repair her error.

On reaching the little chamber, she found Nona still asleep ; and on the instant, an irresistible spell seemed to urge her to look

once more from the window, in spite of the embarrassment and mortification she had been enduring. Without pausing to analyse or combat these feelings, she took the lamp from the table, and placed it outside the door, so that the chamber was left totally dark ; and then, safe from discovery, she softly stepped again on Nona's bed, and put her head towards the open lattice, as cautiously as though she feared some gaping monster watched to devour it outside. Her first glance was sent straight forward, and she saw the black square of the apprentice's window unoccupied and unilluminated. A throb, that felt very like disappointment, (but that she could not believe it to be,) seemed to move within her bosom. Emboldened by her security, she turned her eye in other directions, and at length they fell upon the window of her father's private parlour. To her great astonishment, light came streaming through the bars of the imperfectly constructed lattice work, which served in those days for

shutters, where such an improvement was adopted on the unguarded state of windows in the generality of houses. She stretched forward, and thought she heard the murmur of voices. Quick of apprehension, and sensitive to emotions, let them rise from what source they might, a vague sentiment of fear shot across Theresa's brain.

The scenes of the evening, the political excitement introduced among the company, the governor's violence, the bustling air of her father and the other magistrates, his having hurried her to her apartment, all rushed before her mind; and joining all with the circumstance of the strange apprentice having another man concealed in his turret, and the lights and sounds proceeding at that late hour from her father's private room, she formed an ingenious (and, as our readers already know, an unreal) combination of alarm for Van Rozenhoed's safety.

Before the anxious daughter could enter into

any examination of her feelings, or rightly comprehend them, she had descended the stairs of her turret, and reached a little corridor which connected it with the main body of the building. Beside the door at the foot of the staircase, one opened from this corridor, on the left hand, into the great hall, and another, on the right, led directly into the private room before mentioned, and where Van Rozenhoed, Prince Maurice, and the others, were at that time assembled.

Theresa softly undid the inside fastening of the door that admitted her into the corridor, and she stood for an instant on the lower step of stairs, holding the unwieldy iron handle, but afraid to advance, as the sound of a strange voice struck on her ear, coming direct from her father's room. Without any premeditated plan, she was on the point of stepping into the corridor, but a preliminary glance before her, shewed an object that arrested her still more than her previous nervous incertitude.

This was Jans Broeklaer, placed on one knee, with his eye to the key-hole of the secret parlour; one hand helping to support his unsteady position, and the other held up to his head in a hollowed form, giving every possible facility to the words spoken in the room, as they performed their aerial passage into the cavities of his ear.

Theresa was somewhat shocked at this. She knew from her cradle up that Jans Broeklaer was a favourite and trusted servant in Rozenhoed-house; but she was not aware of the secret privileges assumed, in all ages and countries, by domestics ycleped confidential. She had formed no direct design of listening herself; and if she had, it is probable this evident example of the act would have forcibly appealed against such an intention. We are often made sensible of the unworthiness of our own thoughts, by seeing them reduced to practice in the persons of others. Such was the case in the present instance; and Theresa felt a blush

on her cheek, not less on her own account than that of the culprit before her.

Her first impulse was to retreat from what seemed a participation in his meanness. The next was to rush forward and apprise her father of it. But both were prevented, by the audible discourse, which, beyond all doubt, had reference to her. It was precisely at the period of Prince Maurice's recommendation in favour of his friend, but before he named him, that Theresa began to distinguish what he said; and before she could exert resolution to retire or move forward, she heard his explicit avowal that the subject of his interference was Count Ivon de Bassenveldt.

The very mention of that name carried a shock with it. His aversion rose up in full force; and wounded pride, (for now it was so,) added strength to her repugnance. To be thus made the mark of interference for strangers, she knew not whom, excited her indignation to the utmost. Her father's reply to the over-

tures she heard, afforded her little satisfaction. It was clear that a new influence had succeeded in gaining possession of him. She was only alive to the feeling that she was made an object of barter and trade; and even if she had data on which to judge the motives of the parties concerned, hers was not a mood in which she could examine them. The whole force of her character was excited, and every high, and even haughty sentiment, seemed called into full play. More voices than two mixed in the conversation that followed her father's speech; but it decreased into imperfect murmurs as other objects were touched on.

Theresa had heard enough; but even if she had not, she was obliged rapidly to retire up the turret stairs, for fear of being herself discovered in the same offence, and by the very offender whose conduct she had so recently condemned: for Jans Broeklaer suddenly sprang upon his feet, and with long and gliding strides gained the further end of the corri-

dor. He had seen through the key-hole the apprentice rise from his seat to conceal his emotion, be it what it might, when Prince Maurice, with strong emphasis, pronounced the words "fair play;" and, like a practised listener, he fled, with cautious rapidity, from the chance of detection.

Theresa did not sleep that night. If she from time to time closed her eyes, it was from the instinctive impulse of deep thought, which prompts the movement of the open hand across the brow, more securely shutting the lids that might let in a gleam of material light to disturb its intensity. Reflection thus secured, had uninterrupted force. Theresa saw, in the inward mirror of the mind, the truth of her position on this first trial of the world. She shuddered as she gazed on it, with disgust rather than dread, for she possessed a powerful and fearless spirit. She saw before her a perilous and awful career. She knew not its extent, but she could imagine

its danger. She balanced the evidence of what one night had shewn of worldly agitation, with the testimony of all her previous life as to religious seclusion; and for an instant her heart was filled with the feeling that she ought to renounce the first, and fly back to the deep obscurity of its contrast. But this was the feeling of an instant—no more. The ambitious stirring of her character burst from its controul. She felt that it would be mean and cowardly to fly from danger into what was little better than despair or death. The proud advantages of worldly distinction sprang out before her imagination, in all the emblazonment of youthful hope. She felt all her triumphant anticipations revive; and her heart swelled with the consciousness of its own strength, while it seemed to melt with tenderness, in the conviction that it was not selfishness that throbbed within it.

“One friend!” exclaimed Theresa, “one

faithful friend in whom to repose my confidence, with whom to share my joy—I ask no more, and life has no trial which I will not dare. Oh ! that I could but find such a treasure ! The world is wide—nature is boundless—is there not such in existence ? May not one congenial heart expand, and throb, and melt away in its own tenderness, as mine does now, waiting some electric touch of sympathy, to blend itself with mine ! Can feelings like those that move me with such magic power be given for mine own torment ? Can the heart be filled with wants like mine, but that they may corrode and consume it ? Oh, no, no ! something tells me, stronger than mortal wisdom, that life was meant for happiness, and human feelings granted us for indulgence and delight. Away then, at once, and for ever, with the degrading thought of living buried in a convent walls ! rather let me look out on this new world of brilliancy and splendour, into which I am entering. Let my own energies support me, while

I am alone ; and let my whole heart be ready to meet and join with that other, which (as nature and reason unite in telling me) now pants with the same exquisite anxiety as my own."

CHAPTER VII.

THE bell which summoned the family of Rozenhoed-house, and told the neighbourhood that the chief burgomaster was about to breakfast every morning at eight o'clock, warned Theresa, on that following the night which we have described, not that it was time to spring from her bed, or hasten on her dress, but to give over her attention to the refreshment of her favourite plants and budding flowers, and hasten to partake of some for herself. She had been from almost day-break employed in her garden and green-house ; and had, in the fragrant com-

panionship of nature, and the bracing influence of a spring morning, recovered from the effects of a sleepless night. Her feelings and her features regained their wonted composure; and she entered the breakfast-room in the dazzling glow of health and beauty, and with a renovated tone of dignity pervading both her mind and body.

Madame Marguerite's usual indolence had made her invariably the last of the trio assembled on every preceding morning at table, and Van Rozenhoed had regularly waited until a message from his daughter informed him that his ragout, or pastry, or roasted capon, with his warm tankard of Malmsey, smoked on the board; for not even in his luxurious mansion had coffee yet found its place, though it was just then introduced into France from Turkey, by Thevenot the traveller, and was pronounced by Bacon to be "a drink that comforteth the brain and heart, and helpeth digestion;" and it was half a century later ere Pasqua, the Greek, first

set up a coffee-house and introduced its use in England.

Theresa, whom we may acknowledge, without disparagement to her delicacy, to have eaten and drank in the fashion and taste of her times, was used to partake with good appetite of the matin repast, composed as it ordinarily was of materials that remind one of the oft cited allowance of Queen Elizabeth's maids of honour, or of that stated in an old record of her reign—
“ For my lorde and my ladye, half a chyne of mutton or ells a chyne of beefe boiled, and a chikyng, with certaine quarts of beer and wine.” On the present occasion her early occupations in the breezy morn had encouraged the natural tendencies of youth and health, which over-refinement had not then pronounced inelegant, and she would not have been ashamed to acknowledge to any one (what a modern fine lady would be shocked to admit even to herself), that the savoury odours wafted from the well covered table as she entered the room, pe-

netrated to her palate with a most exhilarating effect. She thought she was, as usual, the first of the family ; and she turned her head to give orders that her father might be summoned, when she was doomed to meet a renewal of the previous night's surprise, on seeing him busily occupied at a side-table, folding up and sealing several pacquets of papers, with Master Lambert Boonen, his apprentice.

We cannot afford time, at this stage of our story, to enter minutely into all the little changes of feeling which, almost every hour, shewed our heroine's character in a new aspect to herself. We hope that enough has been told to convey a notion of what that character was in its main features, and we trust that our readers will sympathise sufficiently with it, to imagine its variations and affections on occasions such as the present. All Theresa's self-respect, the true source of dignity in thought and look, rose up to protect her from any unguarded betrayal of feelings less lofty ; while the air of intense yet

unpresuming admiration which glowed in the apprentice's looks, instantly checked any taint of haughtiness which she might have been disposed to throw into her's. As it was, neither could have appeared to the other in an aspect more effective than those they severally wore; and the first glance of recognition, and the impressive silence of the reciprocal salutation, imperceptibly advanced them deep into each other's favour. Memory does not retrace more rapidly the lapse of years gone by, than does love traverse the space between acquaintance-ship and intimacy. This young couple had but just met—had scarcely exchanged words or thoughts—had had little or no communication of feelings—yet almost at once, and certainly unconsciously to one of the parties, a communion of hearts, a longing after confidence, an involuntary interest in each other, did exist already. Love, even now, had certainly stepped between them, not like a link in a common chain, that separates while it connects two

others, but as a flower blending on the same stalk with its fellows, in an essence of unity and odour. Such was the present effect of the one undefinable passion, so resistless in its approach, so anomalous in its effects, so exhaustless in description. What were the results of its present appearance the sequel of our tale will tell. For the present it is enough to state that Theresa had not the least suspicion of the source of her own sensations; nor did she know the motive of the instinctive delicacy which makes young minds like her's shrink from the first approach of feelings, which the great principle of nature teaches them to invoke and sigh for.

Theresa saw plainly that neither her father nor the apprentice had, more than herself, enjoyed the least repose. The former was still clad in the splendid decorations of his fête dress; while the latter (a striking contrast to his master) wore the simple black suit, unslashed and undecorated, with the plain woollen hose in which he had appeared the previous night. Van Rozenhoed's looks betrayed anxi-

ety, while those of the apprentice were animated and glowing. Matters of moment were evidently in the minds of each, and affecting them in the different ways by which the same causes act on youth and age.

As Theresa marked their appearance, Madame Marguerite entered the room, accompanied by Fanchon, both moving forward in that corresponding gait which might not irreverently be called a waddle. The calmly benevolent countenance of the dame seemed little affected by the scenes which had so agitated the rest of the household : while the lap-dog looked as sleekly irascible as though neither coaxing or combing could change the current of his temper.

“ Good morning, my child ! Good morning, Madame Marguerite,” said the burgomaster to the ladies, as they severally entered ; and after a short pause, in which he and his apprentice seemed to complete their task, he took his place at table. The apprentice followed his example,

so far as Theresa had in a similar way followed that of her kinswoman. But there the respective imitations ended. For while Van Rozenhoed and Madame Marguerite attacked the viands before them with irresistible vehemence, their young companions seemed suddenly to have lost all inclination or all power of eating. Nor did they seem more disposed to fill up the intervals which the occupation of their elders left in the conversation. The latter were for some time too busily engaged to concern themselves with what the others were doing. But at length, as Van Rozenhoed raised his eyes, to accompany, by a glance, the demand he was about to make for some fresh supply, he observed his daughter, with hands unemployed and eyes cast down, while the apprentice, who sat opposite, was occupied in sticking the point of his huge two-pronged iron fork into the embroidered table-cloth, at the same time that his looks seemed striving to pierce the lids of the downcast eyes before him.

“ Why, how now, Theresa !—what ails thee, child ?” exclaimed the burgomaster : “ can the events of last night so weigh upon thy spirits ? And Master Boonen, can you not find better employment for your fork than picking the bones of the birds and fishes in the damask drapet, while so much more substantial occupation courts its prongs among the dishes ? Eat, maiden eat !—and you, young master, let not your modesty require further invitation. Do honour to our repast, which, in sooth, does honour to the housewifery of our respected kinswoman here, Madame Marguerite de Lovenskerke. Ah ! had our late worthy guest, Cornelis Van der Gobble, but tarried for breakfast, he would have tried and judged every dish without pressing ! Come, Lambert, pass me that platter of stewed kidneys, first serving yourself. The champagne and spices of the sauce tempt me exceedingly !”

“ Dear child,” said Madame Marguerite, taking up the cue, and addressing Theresa,

“ help thyself to something, or ask this young gentleman to help thee in this dilemma of thine ; for verily thou hast lost thy appetite, and that never happens without good cause. What is it, love, that changes thee so ? On other days this abstinence is not thy wont. It was but yestermorn thou didst twice eat of pigeon pasty, and as often of yon collared wild boar’s head that now stands before thee untouched. Jans Broeklaer, good fellow, serve me to a goblet of sugared beer, and stir the raisins at bottom of the tankard. Theresa, child, ’twere pity to let that larded sweetbread go from the board dishonoured : prithee give me half on’t, and let thy pretty mouth do justice to the rest.”

As she drank off the foaming goblet, while Theresa helped her largely to her favourite morning dish, she renewed her well-intended banterings, unconscious how much they went home to her fair cousin’s conscience. “ In

troth, now, thou *must* eat, Theresa; there can be no just cause for this, I trow. Thou hast not passed the night in cogitating on the number and nature of thy motley lovers, nor in gazing from thy casement to count the stars, or list a serenade? Nay, blush not, nor look so grave; these things have been done ere now, my dear. Often have I passed such nights, alas! Jans Broeklaer, let me again taste of thy tankard. Thou dost well, Theresa, to try those pickled trout: thy youthful organs can well endure what such as mine may not brook. Ah! Mynheer Rozenhoed, my good cousin, what troublous times are these!—turmoil and broil for ever in this poor town of ours! When or how will all this end?”

“Madame Marguerite,” said the considerate burgomaster, raising from the table a curiously and richly gilt flask, and pouring a supply of its cordial contents into a long shanked glass,

“ here, let me offer you a balm against sore thoughts and sad forebodings. This choicest Rosa Solis—you know its flavour—can best answer your questions, by making you forget their cause. Better days, kind kinswoman, for us and ours !”

While the magistrate quaffed, and the dame but sipped the cordial, Theresa and the apprentice went through the semblance of sharing in the repast, and in a mutual, but unacknowledged desire to avoid observation, they exchanged a few casual and common-place remarks. Had the elders of the party been less engaged, the younger ones had been more embarrassed, if we can at all use that term in relation to the apprentice, who had too much presence of mind to run any risk of self-betrayal.

At length, Van Rozenhoed having gone through the rapid, and, as it after all appeared, the mechanical evolutions of the meal,

he rose somewhat abruptly from his seat, and turning his looks alternately from Madame Marguerite to Theresa, he said—

“ Now, my kind kinswoman, and my dear child, having given full time for your repast, which I would not wish to spoil by a too sudden surprise, I have to prepare ye for a prompt and a somewhat long journey. I set out at noon for Brussels.”

“ For Brussels !” echoed the ladies.

“ Ay, and methinks ’twere well I did not go alone. What say you, Madame Marguerite, and you, Theresa? Would you prefer to stay behind in the kind keeping of the governor, or trust yourselves with me, and bear me company ?”

“ The governor !” exclaimed the dame, with a scream, which Fanchon shrilly echoed, quitting for a moment his plate of savoury tit-bits, and shaking away his curls so as to shew his sunk and bleared eyes, as they fixed on his mistress. “ Oh, Mynheer Van Rozen-

hoed, oh ! cousin, how could you risk the shaking of my nerves by the mention of that monster ? We will all go with you—myself, Theresa, Fanchon—all !”

Theresa’s only reply to her father’s query was a rapid movement towards his open arms, as if she sought shelter from the very supposition of being left behind.

“ I thought so,” exclaimed he, pressing his daughter to his breast, and smiling cheeringly on Madame Marguerite. “ No, no, do not upbraid me ; I never dreamt of leaving either of you in the reach of that ruffian governor’s tyranny ! All is arranged for our departure, save your women’s preparations. Hasten, then, both of ye : furnish your coffers and caskets with as scant a garniture as may suffice for three days’ residence in the archducal capital. To that must my stay be limited.”

“ But, cousin, what does this quick resolve and this great speed denote ! Will you not trust us women with the cause ?”

“ In good time, yes, sweet kinswoman. Ask not now. It all arises from the doings of last night. Let that suffice. Great consequences hang on the issue of this journey; nor must it be delayed, even for the trimming of a lady’s coif!”

A good humoured smile accompanied these words, and he waved his hand to hasten Madame Marguerite’s preparations. She took the hint, and left the room, accompanied by her four-footed favourite, happily unconscious of the fate to which it was doomed, in the issue of this momentous expedition.

No sooner had the door closed, than Van Rozenhoed, having whispered some directions to the apprentice, who immediately returned to his former occupation, addressed himself in a tender and emphatic tone to Theresa, still holding her close to him as he spoke.

“ Yes, my child, you shall accompany me on this journey, nor ever quit my protection, until I can place you in that of him whom your

own heart shall choose to guard and cherish you for life. The scene of last night must have told you the state of public and private feeling, here and all through the land. The whole country is on the eve of a great struggle, and the shock must reach us all. Heaven only knows who may be spared; and as it may be my lot to fall, Theresa, it behoveth us both to dally not in making a fitting choice of one who may fill thy father's place with even stronger, but Heaven knows he cannot, be he whom he may, have fonder claims to thy duty and love!"

A closer pressure from Theresa's arm, which encircled her father's neck, was the only answer to this address.

"And thou must choose, my child," continued he, "ere events may come to leave thee no power of choice. Young as thou art, I would not hurry thee, Heaven witness for me, from any motive of parental pride, were not thy safety itself at stake. But I am even now, and I take my full measure of reproach in the

confession, I am even now afraid I have myself perilled thy safety in making thee the mark of enmity. Thou canst choose but one among thy suitors, and all the rest must hate that one; aye, and perhaps even thee, my sweet and innocent child. But it is now too late—the step is not to be retraced, even though it be a false one. Let us then do our best to repair it. Thou understandest me, Theresa. Hast thou yet given thy thoughts to this subject?”

As Van Rozenhoed turned to seek a reply to these questions, he saw that his velvet doublet and its gold embroidery, glistened in the trickling tears that flowed profusely from his daughter's eyes, as she leant her head upon his shoulder. From the moment that he had mentioned the chances of his own death she had wept incessantly, and had scarcely heard what followed. This quiet proof of tenderness went to the father's heart. He pressed her

still closer to him, and with warm caresses told how he felt for her and with her.

During this scene the apprentice seemed absorbed in his employment. Van Rozenhoed had spoken in an under tone, but not as if inclined to keep his conversation secret. In what followed he raised his voice, and evidently meant it to make a double impression, on Theresa and the apprentice both.

“ The time is at hand for decision on this main point of your happiness and mine, Theresa. Thou knowest I will not seek to warp thy choice. None shall arbitrate thy destinies but thyself. The only conditions to my consent are, that he whom thou mayest fix on must be a Belgian, nobly born, a patriot, and have served the country’s cause. Thou art the representative of noble blood—and methinks thou hast other claims to mate thee with the proudest of the land. In the perhaps too widely opened lists of yesternight, I admitted

all comers—and *one*, at least, who ought not to have entered there. But my kindly feelings towards the youth, and my confidence in thee, Theresa, overcame my pride, and I hope I may not add, my prudence ; for I trust, let appearances be what they may, that thou holdest in proper scorn the overtures of a low-born churl, the son of thy father's foe."

"On that point, my dear father, be assured," replied Theresa, recovering from her emotion, as pride swept its gusty breath across her heart, and dried up the moisture which had flowed from affection, "No one of birth inferior to my own shall sully the blood of two old and noble names."

Renault Claassen alone was in her mind's eye, while she uttered this, and unconsciously drew up every nerve of her elastic form into increased height and tension. But as the words escaped her lips, an impulse equally involuntary turned her looks on the apprentice ; and the blood rushed back from her cheeks, at

the dread of having caused him pain. But she saw his speaking eye fixed full upon her, with an expression that, as she read it, was rather of triumph than humility, as if his mind retorted back the haughty sentiment, with the honest scorn of insulted worth. She cared not to bear the scrutinizing gaze, but gave her looks and her attention again to her father, who continued, with a tone that savoured of exultation rather than of tenderness,

“Spoken like the child of your dear mother ! So would her spirit have prompted her to think and act. And now that I am satisfied on the vital point, and that the views of no inferior can dare, with a hope of success, be lifted towards thee, I feel bound at once to mention (with no wish to even lead thee to a choice, for thou shalt be entirely free) that a strong recommendation has been urged to me in favour of one of your suitors.”

“I know it, my father ; I know and have heard it all ; and much do I grieve that you

for one moment listened, be it spoken by whom it might, to the utterance of a name, which you must hold me all unworthy did I not abhor. Never, so help me, Heaven! shall the vile seducer of my friend be my husband. Never will I consent to see his face or listen to his speech. High birth, and patriotism even, no, not my country's deliverance, dear as you have taught me to prize that glorious object, will make me wed the wanton violator of religion and virtue."

With these words, she fervidly kissed the diamond cross which hung by a chain of gold round her neck; and, as if her present speech were meant as an atonement for the former, she again threw a hasty glance at the apprentice, and she now read in his looks all that was congenial to her own feelings—an impassioned air of admiration, softened by an expression she could not thoroughly examine nor attempt to define. She then, in brief and candid terms, explained to her father the circumstance of her

having overheard a part of the previous night's conversation ; but she omitted any statement of her discovery from Nona's window of the stranger in the apprentice's turret ; rather leaving her motives to be attributed to a mixture of groundless fear with curiosity, than venture on an explanation of the true cause of her descending to the corridor. In return for her avowal, Van Rozenhoed acknowledged to her that the stranger, whose voice she heard, and whose interference she so deprecated, was no other than Prince Maurice of Nassau ; and that it was through his recommendation that Count Ivon de Bassenveldt put forth his pretensions to her hand ; and he at the same moment presented her the ruby ring, and repeated the prince's message.

Theresa felt every nerve tingle with astonishment at this mention of the prince's name ; and we must, as faithful chroniclers, avow that a flush of pleasure warmed her frame. The distinction of being wooed, although but for ano-

ther, by the first hero of the age, the pride of wearing a ring the gift of such a man, the honour of an alliance with his chosen friend, combined for a while to shake the foundations of all her former feelings ; and her first impulse was a wish to recal the oath that yet quivered on her lips. In that burst of surprised delight, De Bassenveldt no more appeared a culprit. His offences were forgotten ; and had he at the moment, in all the daring energy of his character, but flung himself at her feet, he had probably been raised at once, by her hand and to its possession, and Ambition have gained what Love alone was worthy of obtaining. She paused for a moment ; and, without venturing to look towards the apprentice, or even at her father, she said, in an accent that savoured but little of her usually decided, though by no means peremptory, tone,

“ But you, my father, notwithstanding this distinguished patronage, in spite of the public services, the rank, the accomplishments of this

Count Ivon, you surely will reject his suit, nor admit such outrage to your own feelings as its very consideration implies?"

Van Rozenhoed, though sometimes unconscious of the secret springs which moved his own opinions, was shrewd enough as to those of others; and he thought he could see that Theresa was not insensible to the motives which influenced him on this question. He therefore replied,

"On this point you know, my child, I leave you wholly free. I would not interfere with thee in word or thought. But I would suggest to thee to be not rash where thy whole happiness demands caution. Take counsel of thy head as well as of thy heart, Theresa; and let time be the arbitrator of any difference that may arise between them. We must now speed our preparations for this journey. On the road to Brussels there will be ample opportunity for reflection and consultation both."

The effect of this answer was again in op-

position to the speaker's wish. Theresa, thrown back, as it were, upon herself, felt shocked at the weakness, which she now acknowledged. Another of those prompt transitions of which we have shown her to be susceptible, brought her mind to its proper poise ; and every former feeling rose strong again in her heart. She saw that her father's views were, beyond doubt, in favour of the prince's friend. She felt that her own were liable to be warped by the influence that guided his. A secret impulse, which she would not trust herself to inquire into, repelled the suggestions which it told her were unworthy ; and thus, willing to act up to her sense of right and avoid all bias towards wrong, she still felt that she wavered, and that the counsel of a clearer head and cooler heart could alone be able to decide her. Her thoughts instantly rested on her old confessor, the prior ; and yet with a shrinking she knew not why, as if he was not the sort of friend she longed for,

she resolved to proceed immediately to the Dominican cloister, to bid him adieu, and at the same time to throw herself on his advice as to her uncertain and perilous position.

She was spared the avowal of part of these motives, which might lead to conjectures as to the rest, by her father suggesting the propriety of her saying farewell to her spiritual friend, and asking his blessing on her journey. As she was about to quit the room, to give orders to Nona and set out for her visit to the cloister, Van Rozenhoed added, “ With the prayers of his reverence for our well doing, and with a righteous duty boldly to be performed, I augur naught but domestic and public good as the results of this journey. We are all embarked in a common cause. Thou and myself, Theresa, as well as our good cousin, and this young friend, who though so lately known to, is deeply prized by me, and has, in the double right of his uncle and thy father, strong claims on thy good-will. Thou seest that I confide

in him amply. I am not a man to do things by halves ; nor must thou withhold the full measure of thy regard from our fellow traveller. Master Boonen takes the fourth place in my carriage to Brussels.”

“ Does he, indeed ! ” exclaimed Theresa—an exclamation which, if freely translated from the vulgar tongue into the language of the heart, would have meant, “ how delighted I am ! ” Whether the apprentice so received it, or how he read the graceful inclination of Theresa’s flexible form, and the gracious smile on her as flexible features, we are not prepared to say. The only visible effect produced on him was a bow of respectful gravity, apparently as much addressed to the parent as the child.

Van Rozenhoed was perfectly satisfied with himself throughout this whole scene, as all people who are agreeably self-deceived. Professing perfect neutrality in the great question at stake, he as much as possible had biassed Theresa towards his own object. Disclaiming

all authority as to her choice of a husband, he had actually prohibited one candidate, and insisted on qualifications which could be united in very few. And finally he had, by his unconsciousness of danger from one so unpretending and apparently unattractive as the apprentice, positively thrown his daughter into the very danger from which he had formerly shrunk ; and while fancying he acted from free-will, had become entangled in the snare he had made for himself and her.

But if her father was pleased with the aspect of things, Theresa was at least contented ; while the apprentice, had we time to spare for a minute description of his feelings, would clearly appear to be the most satisfied of the party.

CHAPTER VIII.

THERESA was soon in the cell of the prior of Saint Andrew's, having made the few minutes' passage from Rozenhoed-house to the Dominican Cloister in her Father's covered barge, which differed from a Venetian gondola, but in being gaily trimmed and painted, with an image at the prow, and a banner at the stern, and two richly attired boatmen guiding it with gilt headed poles through the simple navigation of the canal. The prior received her at the door of his cell, as in the parlance of the cloister it was still called, for it was the

same in which we first introduced Father Wolfert to our readers, full twenty years ago. But it was now so changed from its old aspect that even the burgomaster, its former frequent visitant as plain Siger Roozen, could scarcely, in his few and far between visits since he became Mynheer Van Rozenhoed, recognise it for the same.

Theresa sat on a velvet-covered stool, beside the down-cushioned arm chair of his reverence the prior ; their feet reposed on a luxurious carpet ; and their eyes rested on all sides on splendid tapestry, representing some of the most voluptuous scenes recorded in holy writ. Susannah and the elders, Potiphar's wife, Bathsheba in the bath, and Ruth " among the alien corn," occupied the once bare walls, and spoke to the imagination the language of passion, in its various degrees from sensuality to love. In the spaces between, pictures, by master hands, of female saints in various exciting attitudes of devotion, marked the prior's

taste, in subject as well as execution ; and the few other articles of use or ornament in the room, proved that its master was not repulsively ascetic, even in his most private retreat.

“ ’Tis well, ’tis very well, fair daughter,” said the prior, as Theresa informed him of the approaching departure for Bruxelles. “ Thou hast my blessing with thee—and the rest as well. Ye are all alike my children—although one claims kindred nearer than that of spiritual parentage. Lambert Boonen has my especial prayers on this enterprize, which abounds in perils to him, more than thou yet mayest know, Theresa. But gratitude to his patron commands this duty, and I hope much from his zealous attention to thy father’s interests and his own, which my good old friend declared last night were firmly joined together.”

“ Did my father say as much, reverend Sir ?” asked Theresa, timidly, yet resolved to be assured.

“He did, my child, when your and Lambert’s night lamps glimmered together on the basin’s surface. It was a casual but curious junction, and ominous, please Heaven! of bright hours and a pure flame--of friendship, my sweet child—only of *friendship*, mind ye, Theresa. Thou must not let a warmer thought enter thy fair bosom, but for him of thy father’s choosing.”

“Holy father, no other thought has risen in my breast for mortal man,” exclaimed Theresa, half frightened at the cautioning, yet she thought sinister, expression of the prior’s tone and look.

“Art thou sure, my daughter?” asked he, taking her hand in his, and looking still more inquiringly and ambiguously in her face.

“I am—indeed I am,” uttered she, her heart beating quickly, from fear that she might have mistaken her own feelings, and that she was unconsciously telling an untruth.

“Consider a moment, Theresa! Is there no

youth of modest mien, that ill conceals an ardent spirit, whose looks have spoken to your heart, and found an answer there ;—with whom you have exchanged thoughts, aye, and it may be, sighs ;—whose birth and pretensions are humble, but whose passion, if you have read its secret existence, could raise him in your estimation with the highest ?”

Theresa felt this rapid questioning quite overpowering. The blood rushed to her cheeks ; she seemed to view her own mind in the borrowed light of her confessor’s sagacity. She could not answer no, and durst not say yes. But the prior continued—

“ Has not nature, and a maiden’s longing, been too strong for reason, and a parent’s commands ? In one word, fair daughter, dost thou not listen to and return the love of Renault Claassen ?”

“ Renault Claassen ! No, no, holy father ; Heaven and my pride forbid ! Oh, you have, by

the mention of that name, eased my heart of a load of terror?"

With these words, Theresa fell on her knees before the prior; and, raising her hands in supplication, she continued—

“ Yes, my revered and reverend father, you did terrify me; why, I know not, for my conscience is free of the crime you suspect me of. Oh, question me not so keenly; the very asking of your glance seems to convict me of some unknown, some unintended sin. But hear me, holy Sir, while I implore your counsel; and aid me, support me by your wisdom—tell me the words of religion and the will of Heaven. My father has listened to a powerful, and almost irresistible suggestion. He has named a suitor to me, in such a way as leaves me not to doubt his wish that I should choose him from the rest. I almost blush to name him to you, father. How can I mention him?"

“ Prithee, good child, be not so scrupulous.

Thou must not pause to name him who may be thy husband."

"And do you, too, holy father, countenance his offers? Can you encourage his pretensions?"

"Nay, nay, sweet child, thou journeyest too fast. May it be that thy secret yearnings give spurs to my counsel? I can scarcely have encouraged the pretensions of one whom thou hast not yet named to me."

Theresa blushed at the penetrating look which accompanied these words, and hastily exclaimed,

"Did I not, indeed, mention the name? My head is confused, good father."

"Perhaps thy heart, fair maiden?"

"I know not which; or if 'tis both, or either. I am, I fear me, very unhappy, or about to be so. I want to open my mind fully and frankly, but it seems as if I cannot. I know not what to say, or how to come to the

object that is readiest in my mind, but it seems out of the reach of utterance."

"Well, well, my poor child, I must help thee from thy embarrassment, for I know all thou wouldst reveal. Calm thyself, Theresa, and list to me. Thy sire, my old and valued friend, dazzled, perhaps, or let us say wisely influenced, by the solicitations of a hero, lends his wishes to the suit of one who bids fair to rival his great patron in valour and virtue; one who seems about to redeem the wild excesses of youth, by deeds of splendid expiation; such, they say, is Count Ivon de Bassenveldt."

"Can you thus depict him, holy father? Is this the portrait of one so lately denounced to infamy and execration?"

"I speak the truth, my child; at least as I have heard it vouched for, by a proud and pure authority. And mark thee, Theresa, I give no opinion of mine own; nor do I recommend thee aught but a dutiful regard to thy parent's

will ; nor do I yet counsel thee to blind obedience : thy conscience must be thy guide in all things."

" But then, my revered and surest friend, do you not at once advise that I reject with scorn the offers of him who has done sacrilege against our holy church ?"

" Its doors are shut against no contrite sinner."

" He who has polluted consecrated ground !"

" The tears of penitence may yet wash out the stains."

" He who has outraged, in my person, what honour and delicacy hold most sacred !"

" Passion, my child, holds venial what innocence considers crime !"

" Oh, father, father ! is it thus you palliate the criminal ? *Could* you advise me to wed De Bassenveldt ?"

" No, Theresa, no ! I neither advocate him nor influence you. I leave him to his expiation—you to your choice. I merely expound

the sentiments of our holy church. And this conference truly reported, as I know you will report it, if at all, will hold me clear of any attempt to thwart the public recommendation of the prince, or the private inclination of your father."

"Alas, alas ! Then where am I to seek for counsel if you leave me to myself? where apply for aid in this emergency, if you refuse it to me?"

"Thy own heart, my daughter, may furnish both."

"Ah, holy father, if that prove treacherous, in proportion as you are cautious, much I fear me that heart will not long stand neuter ; Heaven knows what side it will beat against ! And if—oh, answer me, at least on this point—if, in some weakness of feeling, such a case as you just now falsely suspected should indeed arise ; if this rebel heart, that at this moment riots in my breast, and throbs against the hand that would vainly keep it down, should, in despite of

pride and prudence, mayhap of duty itself, tell me to love some youth, unfit to mate with the rich, the noble, but, it may be, the helpless and unhappy Theresa, what then must be her line of conduct? Must she stifle the voice of nature echoing in her bosom, and spurn, as frail or false, the very monitor you now bid her consult?"

"Nay, my sweet daughter, what bugbear possibility is this thou raisest? Should such a case arise, thou canst always come to me for counsel."

"And may you not throw me back, as now, on the very heart I should then fear and fly from? Or might not this case arrive when I am far from you? Oh, holy father, I tremble while I speak it; suppose it should chance to be on this very journey I am about to undertake?"

"Thy father—"

"Oh, name him not—I durst not—"

"Madame Marguerite—"

"Oh no, no! she is all unfit."

“ Then mark me, Theresa ! One sure, one solid, one devoted friend is left thee—one who is to me a second self, with heart and head for sentiment and sense combined ; with skill to direct, courage to defend, and devotedness to die for, if the sacrifice might be required, the daughter of his benefactor and patron. On him thou mayest safely repose, and firmly reckon. Be he thy chosen confident, thy tried and ever to be trusted friend. Need I say more ? Need I name his name ? Does not thy heart now speak to thee, in true and genuine tones ? ”

“ It does, it does, most reverend father. Speak not—name not his name ! ’Twere worse than dulness to hesitate, or need a voice beyond the one that stirs within my breast. Yes, I am now assured I feel the inspiring certainty of one sympathizing soul being made to blend with mine. Your words seem spoken from beyond the sphere of corporal utterance. Oh, how enthusiastic, how rapturous a thrill shoots through me !—a flame that seems bright but

burns not—shines round me like a halo lighting me to happiness!—Let me hurry hence—let me away, holy father, ere I talk myself wild with joy! I know not what I say or feel!”

“Heaven speed thee--Heaven bless thee, Theresa—I leave thee to its care, my part is done! I love thee as though thou wert mine own child! Thy innocent heart is, must be made for happiness! Farewell, farewell, *my daughter!*”

These words were spoken with a burst of genuine tenderness and warmth that was utterly new to Theresa. The unrepressed expression of her own ardent feelings seemed to have struck forth a light that she knew not to exist in her confessor's character. All was a pleased confusion in her brain; and she hurried from the cell in a mood of uncalculating animation. She thought not of using the mask she carried in her hand, according to the long existing fashion of the country, borrowed from more southern lands. But as she almost sprang from the door-

way into the vaulted corridor, long since described to our readers, she started back on perceiving a man standing close beside the porch. A second glance told her it was no other than Master Lambert Boonen. Alarm was changed to rapture—but the transition was of lightning speed. She paused not on her way ; and sprang forward through the garden to the door that opened on the canal, where the boatmen waited to convey her back to home.

She entered the barge, and threw herself upon a seat, heedless of attitude, unconscious of gracefulness. She held her clasped hands before her, and looked above, as if wonderment and thanksgiving were mingling in her mind. A flash of conviction had passed over it. She seemed to see her fate reflected in the glass of time. She suddenly remembered her father's oft-told story of his first meeting with her mother at the door of Father Wolfert's cell ; and by a coincidence, which her previous frame of feeling, and the superstition that lingered in the age, and flowed

in hereditary succession with her blood, had prepared her to magnify into a decree of destiny, she recollected that this day of her own actual adventure was the twentieth anniversary of that which brought her parents into juxta-position precisely parallel to her own. The inference she drew will be obvious, it is hoped, to the least superstitious as well as the least sceptical of our readers.

In three hours after this interview the travelling party were in full route for Bruxelles. The way was led by the burgomaster's new and costliest coach, which, in the fashion of the day, though superbly gilt and decorated, was nevertheless unfurnished with the simple comfort of doors and windows. A leathern curtain, coarsely hung on an iron rod, was the only security against cold and rain yet afforded by the best kind of vehicles, glass being introduced into France from Venice for the first time about the year 1625, and looked on as the height of luxury. Four sleek and

powerful horses, of the best breed of Flanders, driven by a coachman, dragged on Van Rozenhoed's gorgeous and cumbrous carriage, by a rope harness. Within it were seated its portly and somewhat pompous owner, with Madame Marguerite, carrying Fanchon on her lap, Theresa and the apprentice. In a horse litter which followed was Nona, with the cases containing the dresses of the ladies, and one splendid suit for the burgomaster, destined for the day of audience at the archducal court. An escort of a dozen liveried retainers rode before and after the coach; and the rear was brought up by Jans Broeklaer and a few of the house menials, with three or four sumpter mules of the finest race of Spain, laden with mattresses and bed-covering, and some other necessary comforts, which the imperfect accommodation then afforded in the inns made indispensable for travellers of condition.

The other members of the deputation, a part of the echevins, and others of the city func-

tionaries chosen by Van Rozenhoed, all took to the road on horseback, having appointed a rendezvous with the chief magistrate at "The Imperial Crown," at that period the principal house of entertainment in Bruxelles, situated in one of the narrow streets branching out from the great square, which contained the Hotel de Ville, the Broed Huys, and the mansions of some of the chief nobility of Brabant.

CHAPTER IX.

DURING the time occupied in the arrangements for the chief burgomaster's departure from Bruges, Don Juan de Trovaldo was sitting in his private cabinet, formerly described, from the windows of which he had viewed the preparations at Rozenhoed-house, and he finally saw the party set out from the open space in front of the mansion, in the order which was detailed in the last chapter.

The object of this movement he could not imagine nor ascertain ; for the whole expedition was resolved on so secretly, that none but the

partizans of Prince Maurice had cognizance of it. The governor made vain efforts, through his aid-de-camps and domestics to come at the truth ; but he could only obtain the conviction that a journey of some importance was in the contemplation of Van Rozenhoed and his family. Trovaldo's impatience at length broke all bounds ; and as he observed the carriages turn along the Duyver, and wheel away by Notre Dame towards the Ghent road, he started up, and with his usual savage air, he paced the room in colossal strides. He with difficulty repressed his first impulse to dart out at the head of his guards, arrest the progress of the party, and carry back Theresa by force. Had the strong excitement of passion inflamed him, such would no doubt have been his conduct. But Theresa's personal charms had failed to animate his preoccupied mind ; and his wounded pride, in seeing her thus evading his authority, was not strong enough to make him brave the strict orders of the archdukes for

moderation in the acts of his government. He knew he had already gone too far in the violent proceedings of the previous night. He had therefore listened to the midnight remonstrance of the echevins; and had removed the restrictions so hastily put upon the city in general. The syndic, Zannekin, had been released from his confinement; but Trovaldo persevered, for consistency sake, in the detention of one prisoner; and his private motives decided that that one should be Renault Claassen, against whom he pronounced his resolution to proceed with the utmost rigour.

As he strode through his chamber he burst into a soliloquy, which his fierce carelessness might have made audible to any listener, for he cared not for precautions, and as in his conference with Gaspar, his window lay wide open.

“Is it thus my proposals are received—my power despised?” muttered he, unconscious that he spoke aloud—“And does this fair-haired damsel too elude me, as my own dark slave has

done? Oh, Beatrice, how much more deeply is thy image graven here! By this heart, and by my soul I swear thou shalt be mine, or perdition be my lot! How is my power imprisoned and caged up! I durst not seize this insolent gold-beater, and crush his daughter's pride in the sternness of my embrace. And the daring crew that venture to oppose my claims! That wretched syndic, the popinjay De Grimberghe, and the motley-coloured glutton, with the rest who have fled the scene of contest, the base-born burgher whom I have marked for punishment, and this gaudy baron, sent by the ministers themselves, as if to baulk my views! What must I do? how guide myself in this embarrassed course? And then De Bassenveldt, that bold adventurer, to whom I owe a debt of vengeance doubly deep! How deal with all—with each? Where art thou, Gaspar? Why dost thou not return, to lay thy bloody dagger at my feet, and claim thy liberty, and lead me on to Beatrice? By

Heavens I know not what to do, nor where to turn me ! I want some counsellor. I am fit but to be the instrument of my own desires—I cannot rule nor regulate them. At least let me know, as well as may be, the nature of the obstacles that block my path.—Let me scrutinize the men who stand between me and my designs ! Ho, there ! let the officer on duty attend me !” and as the ready subaltern appeared at the door, Trovaldo ordered him to lead forward Lyderic from the chamber where he still remained in close arrest.

“Sir Baron,” said the governor, controlling his emotion into a stern composure, as the prisoner haughtily entered and took the seat to which Trovaldo pointed, “it is scarcely to be looked for that I choose to justify my conduct in aught concerning my command of this good town. Large powers, you must be aware, are mine, and strong occasions call for harsh measures. It is thus I was forced to place you in arrest. Yet I would do all due honour to a

man of rank, so recommended as you have been. Let me then at once demand your plain avowal of the nature of your connection with the desperate rebel De Bassenveldt."

"Let this token speak for me, Don Juan," said Lyderic, placing on the table the governor's own ring, which it will be remembered he received from Gaspar in the boat.

"What! How! Can this be so! Are you indeed the brave informer against Beatrice's seducer—the bold denouncer of his treason?"

"Even so."

"And have I *thus* rewarded you? Baron, you know that Castilian pride cannot stoop to acknowledge itself wrong; but all the atonement that Spanish honour can admit, I offer you. I waive the impunity I might claim, and am ready on the spot to give you satisfaction, at the rapier and dagger's point."

"You have said enough, Señor—the wrong is atoned for. 'Twas not a personal injury, but

rather a political mistake. I offer you my hand, and with it my firm friendship."

"A generous and noble youth, by St. Ignatio's beard! I may not say *forgive*, but I pray you to forget! Then answer me: Is De Bassenveldt dead—is Gaspar safe—and she, where is *she*? Why did you leave me thus in ignorance? Why not avow yourself yesterday? Why lead me to the risk of offering you indignity?"

"Simply, Don Juan, because I chose not to be bullied even by you, and that I might see and judge with my own eyes, her for whom I was resolved to brave all risk. I answer your last question first."

"Good! To the others then, and quickly."

"Well then, in brief reply, I left the gates of Welbasch Castle just as the Moriscoe's dagger should be sheathed in De Bassenveldt's breast. The result I know not, and of Beatrice can tell you nought."

“This is but scant advice, indeed. Yet all may be accomplished, for I know what Gaspar, rightly urged, can execute. You are the very man I need. 'Tis fate that has thrown you in my way. You hate De Bassenveldt? Wherefore, I ask nor care not.”

“Cordially.”

“You know the secret passes of his castle, its ramparts, galleries, and winding ways?”

“As well as I know your motives for the question, Señor. I know where a mine may be safely laid and surely fired, to blow his boasted fortress into the air.”

“And still some private pass, perhaps, whence a frail woman may be safely stolen erewhile?”

“I know its most concealed intricacies as the paths of my boyhood's sport, Don Juan.”

“And do you still pretend for the hand of this fair heiress? Has your yesternight's reception cooled or fired your purpose?—reply, boldly and frankly!”

“Fired it to the utmost daring, albeit your excellency threatened and forewarned me.”

“’Tis bravely spoken, young Sir. Now hear me. The fire you boast of is a vapoury cloud, compared to the flame which burns in me for Beatrice. To gain her back I give up all besides. The insolent scorn of this cold Fleming has changed the current of my blood towards her person ; and as for her wealth, I utterly despise it. My sword is my estate, I want nor wish for no increase ; and only wonder why or wherefore I thought of this girl. But Beatrice shall be mine again, aye, and for ever, if mortal man may gain his dearest purpose by the most desperate ends ; and hark you, my worthy baron, and if you will my worthier ally, I owe you a good act for the tidings you conveyed, and for the ill I have done you. I offer you a new compact. Be you my guide, my aid to destroy our common enemy, the rebel Ivon, if my slave has failed to do him death ; gain me back Beatrice, and I here, on a soldier’s faith,

renounce all claim on the heiress you aspire to. You answer not, baron—am I not plain spoken?”

“Pardon me, Señor. If I did pause awhile, ’twas but in marvel at your generous offer. Need I say I greedily accept it? Shall I swear faith to the conditions and to you?”

“No, Sir—I ask no oaths. The name of a true Hidalgo be *my* guarantee. A noble of Brabant needs give no other pledge.”

“We shall have stirring work on hand, Don Juan, to complete our purposes.”

“Then let’s about it bravely! In the first place, for your own particular part, you must look sharply to this heiress. I have cleared the way for your approach, by putting nine-tenths of her suitors to flight, and throwing into prison him from whom most was to be feared.”

“Who, the young tanner?”

“Aye, it is most like that this burgher’s daughter would, after all, show favour to some

low citizen, in preference to noble blood like your's, or even mine."

"I much doubt that inference, Señor; I saw the pride of ancestry perched on her brow last night, and the tanner's son shrank from its glance. I dread a far more distant and more dangerous rival. I doubt me, or rather let me say I know that De Bassenveldt yet lives, and while he does, nothing will bar his daring. With woman for his prize, danger and difficulty but urge him on, like the wind in a vessel's sails."

"He must then be quickly disposed of for both our sakes. I shall soon shake this eagle felon from his nest! and an active gallant like you can well forestall him in yon maiden's favour. No time is to be lost. You must forthwith press your suit, and follow on her track. She is no more in Bruges—Van Rozenhoed and his whole family are suddenly gone towards Ghent."

“ Indeed ! and think you, Don Juan, he means to stop there ? I’ll wager my whole wardrobe against a burgher’s camblet cloak, that he is gone full speed to Brussels, to work some mischief to your excellency.”

“ Ha ! by the life blood of my saint,” (and here the governor piously crossed himself,) “ you open a new light on me ! you are a clever counsellor—my hopes are not belied—you are the very man I needed. How dull I have been to this !—But how now to circumvent this factious old burgomaster ? He too must perish.”

“ Aye, and like t’other, for both our sakes, Señor. However I may make way with the daughter, on personal grounds, he will never consent to give her to a faithful subject of the archdukes. Rebellion stands far higher than royalty in his regard.”

“ Death to the traitor !—Ha ! who’s there ?”

This latter exclamation was caused by the entrance of the subaltern on duty in the anti-

room, who announced that a burgher of the city claimed an immediate audience of Don Juan, on matters of moment to the state.

“Let the citizen appear—these are times that suffer no delay. Nay, seat you again—I cannot spare you from my presence. Be now in my confidence though no longer in my keeping,” said the governor, as Lyderic rose to retire with the officer, who presently returned leading in a sturdy looking man, of middle age, well dressed, and evidently of the higher class of citizens. He threw open his short cloak as if to give himself air, and drew off his beaver hat for the same purpose, rather than for any motive of courtesy, as was proved by his immediately commencing to fan himself with its slouched leaf, and at the same time seating himself in the nearest chair.

“What’s this?” exclaimed the governor haughtily; “your name and business my good burgher?”

“Methinks you must know the first, and

might divine the latter, Don Juan," answered the citizen.

"Mynheer Claas Claassen, if I err not?" replied Trovaldo, who could no longer feign ignorance of a man so notorious in the city, and whom he had often met on matters of public business.

"The same, and your excellency's poor servant."

"Ha! when my service is wanting, is it not so?"

"I want nought for which I may not give an equivalent, Don Juan," said Claas Claassen, with a tone that spoke a temper ruffled, rather than subdued, by his son's perilous circumstances.

"Somewhat has chafed you, Mynheer, this morning," said the governor tauntingly.

"The danger of a dear child in such a power as your's might warm a colder spirit than mine," replied Claassen, wiping his brow with his taffeta lined cloak. "But 'tis not that

which heats my blood just now, nor that alone that brings me to ask a favour from Don Juan de Trovaldo. In brief, I love my boy, but would sooner see him die by a Spanish axe, than bow my knee to a Spanish governor, to be spurned as I know I should be in a case like this. Renault has raised the cry of Liberty, and that is but treason in your nation's creed. He worships his God in spirit more than form, and that is heresy !”

“ Hold ! at your peril stop your audacious tongue, or by our holy church, yourself and your rebel son shall die within the hour !”

The governor accompanied this threat by a stamp of his foot and a stroke of his clenched fist against the table, which brought the officer, with several of the guard, quickly into the room, and half a dozen halberds were immediately levelled at the citizen, as the natural mark for their assault. Claassen stood undauntingly up, as the governor pointed to the ready instruments that waited but a nod to

put him to death, and as Don Juan waved his hand and they retired, a smile of rough contempt curled the bold burgher's lip.

“ You see, Mynheer, how soon I might have stopped your brawling breath,” coolly observed the governor.

“ And at the same time have smothered a secret of some importance to you,” retorted Claas Claassen.

“ Why, have you aught to reveal? If so, speak out—but not with boisterous insolence. What is your business here?”

“ I *have* somewhat to reveal, and of no light moment either—but it is for your excellency's private ear. It is matter that concerns the state.”

“ You may freely utter this mighty secret, worshipful burgher. This gentleman, my friend, and the walls, may safely hearken to all you have to tell.”

“ Another sarcasm like that, Don Juan, and

my lips are sealed. If I must not brawl, you shall not scoff, depend on it."

"Saint Jago! must I endure this fellow's insolence?" muttered Trovaldo, clenching his hand. "How shall I deal with him, baron?"

Lyderic, to whom this appeal was made, was impressed with the notion, which had failed to strike the furious Trovaldo, that it must be some serious information in the burgher's power of discovery that imparted to him so assuming and so fearless a tone. He therefore replied:

"Bear with the worthy citizen, Don Juan. His temper is roused—he is a father, recollect, and allowance must be made on his son's account. Let him proceed in his own way."

"Go on then, Mynheer Claassen—my duty to the state commands me to hear your communications, and suppress my resentment," said Don Juan, throwing the greatest possible haughtiness into his looks.

"First then let those windows be closed—I

do not choose to speak to every shrub in the goldbeater's gardens," exclaimed Claas Claassen, reseating himself with studied indifference.

"By St. Jago!" cried the governor, again raising his clenched hand; but Lyderic, by a short entreaty, stopped the rage which was mounting with the gesture, and stepping across the chamber, he shut the unwieldy frames of the open windows, and then took his place again beside the governor, anxious to keep down his overboiling indignation.

"Now, Señor Governor," said Claassen, "I am prepared to speak; but my first condition, and mind ye, I ask no *favour* at your hands, is my son's freedom."

Don Juan fiercely started, and would have burst again into the vehement utterance of his anger, had not Lyderic soothed him by a conciliating sentence; and during the conference that followed, these cunning efforts were required between every sentence spoken by the intemperate pair.

“ If your communication be of any worth, your son shall be free—but until it is proved to be so, your own head shall be hostage for his,” muttered Trovaldo.

“ And *should* they prove so, as they must do, what guarantee have I for his safety ?” asked the citizen.

“ My honour !” answered Trovaldo, with another effort to suppress his indignation at the doubt implied.

“ Humph !” growled Claas Claassen. “ This baron, as you call him, be my witness to this promise.”

“ I vouch for its fulfilment with my life,” said Lyderic.

“ Then hear me, Don Juan,” resumed Claassen ; “ you tread on the brink of ruin. Van Rozenhoed is gone to Brussels, to lay at the foot of the archdukes’ throne his plaint against your tyranny and last night’s violence.”

“ Is this your pitiful secret ?” exclaimed

Trovaldo, rising from his seat and throwing a look of scorn on the tanner. “Think you that the Governor of Bruges has to learn the movements of its factious citizens from one of the most factious? So this, Baron de Roulemonde, is the mouse with which this Mountain Burgher was so big! Ha, ha, ha!” and the hoarse laugh was accompanied by a corresponding shaking of the governor’s high shoulders and gaunt limbs, while his long rapier kept time against the oaken floor, and the chain belt it hung from clanked in every link.

“So, this is the wondrous revelation,” continued he, “that is to gain the young rebel’s pardon! This the ruin that threatens to ingulph Don Juan de Trovaldo! This the secret that the leaves may not list to! Ha, ha, ha!”

“Scoff on, Señor, if such beseems your station and serves the state,” drily said Claas Claassen, folding his arms across his breast, crossing his legs, and throwing himself still farther back in his chair—“I thought not you

were so well informed. You know too, no doubt, that four of the eschevins, the greffier, and the liberated syndic, with a score of citizens of wealth and influence, are now on their various roads to Brabant, to join the burgo-master, and clamour forth their corporate accusations against your all-wise excellency !”

“ What ! Ha ! Is it so ?” exclaimed Trovaldo, interrupting the tanner,—“ Do they dare to conspire in masses of revolt ? By Heavens my troops shall scour the roads around, and crush them every one !” and he would have rushed from the room, to issue orders in accordance with this passionate vow, had not Lyderic withheld him, and strongly urged a calm consideration of the threatened peril.

“ Be it so !” said the somewhat less infuriate governor, “ I submit me to your prudence, Baron : what next, Mynheer Claassen ?”

“ Is not this enough, Señor ? What would you more ? Have I not given you warning of your enemies’ efforts sufficient to place you on

your guard? Is my son free? Have I not redeemed my pledge?"

"No!" vociferated Trovaldo, "not half redeemed it! What care I for the base-born herd that dare to mean me ill? Do I stand so low that I may not o'ertop such enemies as these? I have listened to you with a patience which belies the noble blood that boils in my veins. You may now depart—your son shall pay the forfeit of this confederate treason. Away, Sir!—The Governor of Bruges disdains all further parley with its leather-dressers. Retire!"

"Did I reckon wrong, Don Juan? And you, my bold baron, who were so ready to pledge your life on this governor's faith, what say you now?—was it worth the pledge?" asked Claassen, without moving from his posture of insolent carelessness. Lyderic was convinced that something more than mere indifference to danger on his own and his son's part actuated the tanner, and he therefore replied,

“Methinks, Mynheer Claassen, you make too long a matter of this. One of your sharp mind and blunt bearing must know your position, and see it is a false one. You promised revelations touching the state. Where are they? Do you expect Don Juan de Trovaldo to be the dupe of those paltry burghers you spoke of, and who, it would seem, have sent you here to play a part for their own purposes?”

“*They* send me here! They make a tool of me! They who have slighted, scorned, and dared to pass me by!” exclaimed Claassen, losing all self command, starting from his seat, and advancing towards Lyderic and the governor. “No! you mistake me, it seems, as they have done. But ye shall be soon set right. Aye, though all Bruges should shake to its foundations.”

“’Tis strange,” said Lyderic, penetrating the tanner’s mind, and fanning the flame that burned in it, and at the same time secretly

urging his elbow against Trovaldo's side, "'tis marvellous that one of civic station, such as you, Mynheer, and of no doubtful politics neither, should not form one of a deputation framed even on a pretext of the city's privileges?"

"Aye," exclaimed Trovaldo, rather tardily discovering the bent of Lyderic's observations, and willing to aid their effect, "aye, and one, it must be in truth confessed, who slinks not in corners with a coward caution, but has ever manfully spoken his mind, be it right or wrong."

"True—you speak truly, Don Juan; and, even though it be for once only, you do but justice to me. Yet this gold-beater, this upstart, this pride-bloated Roozen, he who had never been chief magistrate of Bruges but for my influence, has dared to cast me aside; and with his papist faction—nay, loose your rapier's hilt, Don Juan, I *will* speak what I think and

feel—he with his bigot crew dares to act in a case like this, without one word of counsel ’twixt them and *us*, the true patriots of the city. *They* make us free without our own consent! *They* serve the city, to our exclusion!—No! They have passed the bounds of my endurance, and dear shall be the forfeit! Hark ye, Don Juan! From your wealth of wisdom can you spare me the knowledge of one poor fact? From your store of words can you answer me one plain question? Who supped in Siger Roozen’s private parlour last night? Who passed the city’s gates in the guise of an Amsterdam trader, with that ill-favoured hypocrite Van der Gobble, who came as ’twere a courting to her who scorns ye all, save one silly lad who is frightened at his own good fortune? Can you not answer me? One word in your ear then, governor—” and leaning with both palms on the table, he stretched across, and putting his face close to Don Juan’s, he said,

in a hoarse undertone that sounded hollow and treacherous in the vaulted ceiling—"Maurice of Nassau!"

Trovaldo sprang up from his chair, but Claassen placed his rough hand on his shoulder, and held him down again.

"Hold!" cried he, "that is not all. Who broke bread and dipped in the dish with the prince and his host?—The Prior of Saint Andrew's! Who noted down their secret conference, and registered their private compact? Lambert Boonen, the prior's nephew, the underhand tool of all his projects, the unknown, despised, yet daring rival of ye all for the sly maiden's heart! Have I now spoken out? Have I said enough? Is the state concerned in this? Are your own interests compromised? And *which* is dearer to ye, valiant and virtuous lords?"

Much more was added to this rapid revelation by the almost phrenzied Claassen. The first bounds passed of honour and faith, he

hurried on in heedless fury, hoping to hide himself in deeper infamy from his already roused remorse, like the bird that believes the hunters baffled, when its head is concealed from their view.

Whatever was the result of the conference between the corrupt triumvirate, Claas Claassen was seen within an hour after noon swaggering through the streets of Bruges with an air of desperate bravado ; while his son Renault walked by his father's side more like a conscience-stricken felon than a freeman loosed from his chains.

CHAPTER X.

THE unconscious objects of the conspiracy thus commenced and hourly ripening, journeyed meanwhile along the road to Ghent, at a pace more rapid than we are wont to attribute to the movements of travellers in those early days of coach-making. The heavy horses skilfully guided along the broad paved causeway, made light of their load; and the cavalcade that followed the chief vehicle regulated its movements by that. Several of the members of the deputation were overtaken as they trotted slowly on, on horses of various value,

in high-peaked saddles, with valisses, or portmanteaus strapped behind and before, slouched hats and spacious cloaks, the common costume and accoutrements of cavaliers of the time, of almost all ranks. Some of more lively temper than the slowly-plodding seniors, cantered and caprioled for a while beside the carriage, offered complimentary salutations to the ladies, or exchanged words and looks of impressive meaning with Van Rozenhoed, who gazed proudly on the companions that acted on the occasion subordinate parts to himself.

Madame Marguerite enjoyed the whole scene with all the buoyancy of her good-natured disposition. She saw the sky without a cloud, and the world without a care. Almost forgetful of the tumults of the previous night, she calculated not the chances of the morrow. She had no perception but of the present ; and rolling along in her cousin's carriage, handsomely attired, honourably attended, and with Fanchon on her lap, the gossiping cheerfulness,

which rarely met with a check, was amply indulged. While the burgomaster reclined in his corner, deep in thought, or chatted at times in an under voice to some one of the deputies who bent their heads close to the curtains of the carriage, the worthy dame held forth to Theresa and the apprentice (placed side by side on the opposite seat) in full indulgence of her innocent and unmeaning prattle. Not a chateau was seen with its tall brick chimneys and high gables peering through the trees, but Madame Marguerite entered into a genealogical dissertation on the family it belonged to. Every village drew forth a similar descant on its Lord Paramount, or Grand Seigneur. The dingy walls of several convents to the right and left led to monotonous anecdotes of priors, abbots, and abbesses, with conversions and miracles without end. She was, in fact, a living road-book, peerage-list, and grammar of heraldry combined; and with the usual acuteness of small intellects, she remembered to a league

the distance from village to village, and chateau to chateau ; with all the dates of births, marriages, and deaths of half the families between Bruges and Brussels.

Almost heedless of, and wholly indifferent to her innocent gabble, Theresa and her nearer companion seemed, for the earlier part of the journey, immersed in their own thoughts. They rarely spoke ; but in the few words they from time to time uttered, there was a tone of softened animation, the inseparable consequence of a close neighbourhood to an object which the heart, even unknown to itself, approves. The parting scene with the prior, and the rencontre immediately following it, produced in our heroine an exhilaration of spirit that would at every moment have overflowed, had not the presence of him whom she now acknowledged to herself to be the being of all others she most wished to be near, repressed every word, and checked every thought that longed for utterance. Yet there was nothing painful in this.

Her heart told her that a sympathy existed with all she felt ; and when those stifled words and thoughts rushed back into her bosom's depth, it did not throb with an oppressive sense of fulness, but rather swelled in the consciousness of a secret delight intuitively shared by another. The heart that is replete with love is also instinct with penetration. The passion that pervades it quickens its perceptions ; and without a word or act of positive evidence it catches with unerring promptness the only truth it cares to seek for. Theresa had therefore no doubt as to the apprentice's sentiments towards her. And if she, with all the tenderness and timidity of woman's nature, was so alive to this conviction, what must have been *his* as to her state of feeling, urged on to the discovery as he was, by all the ardour of manhood ? He was assuredly well satisfied of the truth. For—and at once let us avow the fact—he had followed from the first the one great object of gaining Theresa's affections, with

which view he had been (as Claas Claassen had well divined) introduced into Rozenhoed-house by the wily prior, from whom he received ample details of her parting visit to the cloister, with the means of excitement by which he had so successfully worked her up to the very point of an avowal that was scarcely necessary to one who watched her so narrowly.

The party reposed the first night at Ghent, where they arrived rather late, notwithstanding the excellence of their equipage. Van Rozenhoed sat erect with pride as he rattled over the pavement, and crossed a large portion of the three hundred bridges which connect the twenty-seven islands on which this celebrated city is built. The long existing rivalry between it and Bruges had by no means ceased at this epoch; and although a common interest had, on occasion of "the pacification," induced them to act in concert against the main enemy, yet the old jealousy was now revived, with sufficient force to prevent any direct co-operation in the

newly projected effort for liberty. Bruges had once more taken the lead ; and her magistrates, in the spirit of partizanship, rather than patriotism, determined to exclude the rival city from it. The deputation therefore passed through as mere individuals ; and as the burgomaster and his friends moved in grand cavalcade through the streets the following morning, they left the men of Ghent to stare and wonder at the pomp and circumstances of their display.

The next day brought the travellers to Alost, where Van Rozenhoed determined on stopping, that they might have but a short distance to go the following morning ; and with horses refreshed, and their whole equipments in good order, make an imposing entry into Bruxelles, worthy the reputation of the city they represented, and the importance of the cause they came to plead.

In proportion as they drew near the capital of Brabant, the seat of the archducal government, and approached to the close contact with

sovereignty, in the strong hold of its grandeur and power, the burghers were affected with a mixture of resolution and awe, that gave to them an air becoming the solemnity of their situation. It was not, however, to be expected that the apprentice and Theresa were to be deeply imbued with those feelings, or stamped with this appearance. As for her, she felt nothing but a lightness of heart and mind, that animated her with a previously unknown effect. The fine spring weather, the variety of the journey to her for whom it had all the charms of total novelty, and the sensations before described which bounded in her breast, combined to give Theresa a tone of surpassing grace and loveliness; and the apprentice seemed fully to feel its inspiration. By degrees he broke from the delicious reverie which the first day had seemed to absorb him. It appeared, too, that the approach to the scene of political interest had its share in the excitement under whose influence he looked and spoke. Altogether he

grew hour after hour more animated and more agreeable to his fair neighbour ; and even Madame Marguerite yielded to him the chief place which she had at first occupied in the conversation of the road. The youth flew from subject to subject with a vivacity and power that held both the ladies in their various ways delighted ; and in the occasional bursts of patriotic zeal which garnished his discourse, the burgomaster felt himself carried away, even beyond the flight of his own enthusiasm.

About noon, on the third day's journey, the Bruges deputation passed within the old and formidable ramparts of Brussels, by the Flanders' gate ; not without a glance of angry annoyance at the bas relief above their heads, representing the army of their Flemish ancestors driven out from the very gate they now passed through by the turnspits and scullions of Brussels, and thus commemorating a disgraceful surprise and defeat which actually was effected

by the efforts of such unworthy adversaries in the year 1356.

The citizens came out in crowds to gaze on the proud array ; and the whole were in a short time lodged in their different quarters, duly bespoke and prepared for their reception by the outriders of Van Rozenhoed's household, sent forward for the purpose.

No sooner were the burgomaster and his family established in their hostel than a scene of bustling occupation commenced between him, his apprentice, or, as he now stood acknowledged, his secretary, with the chief members of the deputation. One of the eschevins, accompanied by half a dozen armed followers, bearing the badge of the city of Bruges emblazoned on their surcoats, proceeded, as soon as dinner was over, to the archdukes' palace with a written announcement to Don Christoval Zaputa, signed by Van Rozenhoed, that he and others of the magistrates and citizens of Bruges, had arrived in Brussels, and claimed

the honour of an audience on the earliest possible day, to lay before their highnesses the archdukes a petition of moment, touching the privileges of their city, and to be heard in complaint against the illegal violence of its governor, Don Juan de Trovaldo.

To this haughty and uncompromising declaration of war, as it might be fairly considered, an answer was, in the course of the afternoon, returned, couched in very courtly and conciliating phrase, and appointing, by their highnesses' command, the hour of two o'clock on the day but one following, for the reception of the worshipful burgomaster and his goodly company, to fulfil the object of their mission before the archdukes in full council in the audience chamber of the palace. The tone of this official communication considerably elevated the spirits of Van Rozenhoed and his townsmen. The old Flemish pride was up to its highest pitch. They contemplated the glory of reading a new lesson to their tyrants, even in the

very teeth of their prerogative ; and they anticipated the humiliation that was to fall on Trovaldo, and all the Spanish faction they had left behind, lulled in a false security. A few of the chief men of the deputation, Van Rozenhoed's most intimate friends, passed the remainder of the evening with him at his apartments in " the Imperial Crown." They did not, on this occasion, resort to the common means of killing time. No chess, or gleeke, or primero table, assembled round it faces distorted with worthless calculations or unworthy anxiety. Matter more manly occupied their minds ; and they debated and resolved the measures to come, as men intent on the grand object of their country's deliverance, with some of the weakness and over sanguine anticipation excusable in the circumstance.

During the evening thus occupied in council by the male part of the deputation, Madame Marguerite and Theresa, forming its female dependencies, employed themselves in their pri-

vate chamber, arranging plans for the morrow, overlooking their dresses, which were carefully displayed by Nona, and preparing all those articles for the toilette essential to the figure which their station required them to make in their public appearance in the streets of Brussels the next day. Theresa gave many an impatient sigh as Madame Marguerite disserted on the various merits of lace, brocade, and embroidery, and she longed for the breaking up of the party in the large parlour below, wondering what could occupy them so long and so entirely, and why Master Lambert Boonen at least could not find a moment to come and cheer them after their fatiguing journey, with some quaint tale or lively anecdote, such as he had so pleasantly recounted on the road. It seemed as if the constant habit of seeing him beside her for three whole days, had made his presence essential to her comfort; and as hour after hour struck from the clock of the town-house in the great square

hard by, she became increasingly dissatisfied ; till at last a message from her father (borne by Jans Brocklaer) recommended her to hasten to bed, as there was no probability of his friends separating for still some time. Considerably disappointed, and somewhat inconsiderately discontented, Theresa at length followed her father's recommendation, but it was long ere sleep relieved her, in her own despite, from the chagrin which, with strange perversity, she felt willing to indulge.

“ Better,” quoth she to herself, as she finally nestled her head in the down pillow which had so often received its nightly pressure (for Nona took good care to let it form part of the travelling equipment), “ better to think of him even in disappointment than not think of him at all ! Better, oh, far better to suffer than be insensible ! Oh, Master Lambert Boonen, how pleasant, how intelligent, how interesting thou art ! Why art thou not such in all respects as would entitle me to think of thee

as more than a gay companion—or even, in emergency, as a mere friend ! Ah, well-a-day ! I would thou hadst been all my father requires, and that I myself would have thee to be—noble, one who had done, or were like to do, good service to our country. And why didst thou not appear to-night, to cheer us awhile in this strange place, so comfortless without thy presence ? Indeed, it was ill done, Master Boonen : but I forgive thee—I would not sleep with an evil thought or angry recollection. Good night, good night, Lambert ! May Saint Anne watch over thee !”

In mental murmurings like these, our heroine’s spirit quietly sank into repose. She heard no more the feet of the citizens, the trampings of horses’ hoofs, nor the tolling of the bells. Every street sound was hushed. The low whistling of the wind through the ill-closed windows was all that spoke to her in outward or ordinary tones ; and in a little more, even this murmur seemed to exist within herself.

Visions of strange enchantment rose upon her mind. It passed at once into the world of shadows. Scenes of indistinct delight swam before her. Prominent in all was the figure of the apprentice in thousands of fanciful forms ; while the sweet notes of the voice that sung the night song beneath her turret, mixed with the imagined harmonies that filled her dreams.

CHAPTER XI.

AT five o'clock the next morning, Theresa was awoke from her delicious slumbers by the tolling of the great bell of St. Gery, which sounded regularly at that hour in those days, as a warning to the brewers that they might legally begin their task of beer making. Theresa started at the sounds, and would willingly have slept and dreamt again. But the matin noises of the city, in the very heart of which the hostel was situated, made such further indulgence impossible, and told her that she

was now in a neighbourhood far more bustling and boisterous than any to be met in her own elegant and quiet town. The city swarms began to buz in all their various intonations. The lowing of oxen and bleating of sheep, told her that the cattle mart was at hand, while the rumbling of heavy chariots proclaimed to more accustomed ears the vicinage of the corn market, with those for poultry, vegetables, fruits, and the other sundry productions necessary for the consumption of a large population. As soon as the daylight came fully into her unshuttered windows, she awoke Nona, who occupied a closet in her room, and restless to begin the rounds of the day's occupation, she hastened her preparations for dressing, and was soon ready to descend for breakfast.

The others of the party were not less active, nor had one of them fallen asleep earlier or awoke later than our heroine, each being affected, as was she, by their several anti-dormant anxieties. The particular nature of these must

be left to our reader's imagination, that friendly associate which so often steps in, to fill up the vacuum which the minutest chronicler is as often forced to leave.

At nine o'clock, the world of fashion, as it then existed in Brussels and other great towns, having eaten and sufficiently digested their hearty morning meal, began to go forth, in all the idle employments of busy nothingness, which their degenerate descendants of the present time commence some five or six hours later. Van Rozenhoed's coach was at the door of his hostel, the four black steeds refreshed from their journey, shining and sleek, and gorgeously caparisoned in the state harness and housings carefully brought from Bruges. The coachman was embedded in his ponderous seat, which was covered with a leopard's skin of considerable value, and he held his reins of leather twisted round with many coloured ribbons, loosely in either hand. Two outriders took their station in front, and four varlets on foot,

stood one at the head of each coach horse, and provided with hazel rods, to urge on their speed in obedience to the directions of the pilot charioteer, who guided, but scorned to flog them. And in front of all was an equerry appointed by the minister to attend on, and act as guide to the burgomaster and his friends.

Van Rozenhoed handed Madame Marguerite to her place in the carriage. Theresa came next, but not escorted as she wished, and as we might have wished her to be ; for the presence of old Nicholas Zannekin, the syndic, tottering by her side, told that he was to supply the place during the morning's drive that had been filled during the journey by the apprentice secretary, who was now obliged to remain within doors, in the ample occupation which the circumstances gave him.

Van Rozenhoed shewed himself in full view as a sample of Flemish splendour to the admiring citizens. Madame Marguerite was

in the highest tone of spirits. They, like her silk brocade, were rose coloured, and they gave their hue to every thing she saw. Theresa was dull, silent, and sad. Zannekin nodded assent to all that was spoken, and approbation to all the others saw, for he slept soundly in his corner during nearly the entire drive. And many sights were seen on that occasion, which we should particularly enumerate did we wish to tantalize the reader by exciting curiosity which can no longer be gratified. Almost all the wonder-moving monuments of that time have, for many and many a year, ceased to exist. Churches and monasteries, in which Brussels was then so rich, long low levelled to the earth; pictures of price, crumbled to decay from neglect, or carried off to other lands, and leaving the city comparatively destitute; collections of curiosities, for ages scattered to the winds: the plumed cap of Montezuma, the sword of Pizarro, the war harness of Charles V., the dark lantern which

lighted him on many a perilous night watch, the standard of France, which he seized at the battle of Pavia, with the armour of Philip the Good, the great Duke of Parma, and others, while that of Alva grew rusty with remorse, as it was shone on by the lustre of those of so many heroes ; such were a few of the articles contained in the Heraldic Chamber, as was called an ancient building that stood on the confines of the park, and is now trampled out of memory almost by the extensive foundations of the king's palace.

And as the party came out from viewing such exciting relics, and mounted the ramparts, which then stood close to the edge of the park, the lofty trees of which spread over the extent now covered at all sides by princely buildings, they saw a party of courtiers within, hunting a stag with greyhounds ; while in a swampy hollow, the bottom of which was covered by a small lake, another group was seen, chiefly consisting of females, one of whom stood con-

spicuous in dress and appearance, and was attended at a respectful distance by the others. This lady was tall of person, and of a lofty bearing, habited in a close fitting suit of green richly embroidered, with the high stiff ruff and coif, and a little pointed hat, such as is made familiar to us in the portraits of her contemporary Elizabeth, Queen of England. Theresa and her party could not distinguish her features ; but their guide informed them they gazed on no less a personage than the Archduchess Isabella, who, with her favourite band of courtly attendants, was enjoying her favourite sport of heron shooting. Ere Theresa had time to express her astonishment at this somewhat unfeminine amusement, one of those birds, which were preserved in quantities on the borders of this artificial lake, and fed on the fish, with which it was well stocked for their support, rose lazily up from the rushes and flaggers that were beaten with rods by a couple of pages, whose sole service was the

care of these sports. As the bird contracted into a curve its long neck and expanded its wings for flight, the archduchess raised an ebony stocked fusil, light in comparison with the arquebusses then in use among such sportsmen as had adopted fire-arms in the field, and putting it to her shoulder and taking steady aim, she pulled the clumsy trigger. The bird fell wounded on the surface of the lake, and struggled over towards a bunch of rushes for protection. The royal sportswoman coolly handed her weapon to an attendant to be reloaded, and then advanced to assist in seizing her mangled prey, which, with shrill cries and desperate struggles, resisted the efforts of the pages to drag it to shore. It flapped its unmaimed wing, and darted forth its neck, directing its beak with instinctive judgment towards the eyes of its assailants : but experience taught them to avoid its assaults, and they hung back, either from fear of the heron, or in flattery towards their mistress, who boldly approached,

and seizing the struggling bird by the throat, she bore it away, fluttering and dying, and hoarsely shrieking in her grasp.

Theresa, disgusted and sickened at the sight, entreated her father to leave the spot, and the carriage was in consequence soon again in motion towards other exhibitions than this. The sacred elm that stood in the waste ground, afterwards converted into the Duke of Aremberg's garden, close to the gross tour, as it was called—one of the round towers of the ramparts between the gates of Namur and Halle—next became the object of observation. The spot was famous for the torture and execution of the Jews convicted of sacrilege in the year 1370, which led to the jubilee, since regularly celebrated every fifty years, in honour of “the holy sacrament of miracles.” After duly viewing and wondering at the triple-branched elm, each member of which growing in the form of a cross, marked with supernatural reproach the scene of this unchristian sacrifice, the party

resumed their carriage, and proceeded towards the square called the Great Sablon, where a considerable crowd was gathered to view the assemblage of the *guldens* or guilds, composed of the wealthiest citizens of the different companies of archers, which were about to commence their feats of bowmanship. The various companies of the Holy Virgin, Saint George, Saint Sebastian, and others, were drawn up in various lines in the large court, surrounded by a brick wall, which extended from the church of Notre Dame des Victoires far into the Sablon, but is now covered by a mass of houses, ingeniously disfiguring, if not wholly hiding the view of the fine gothic pile.

The loud flourishing of trumpets, and other musical sounds, announced the approach of the archduchess, who was not only to preside at the sports, but to enter the lists herself, as a shooter at the artificial bird placed on the topmost vane of the church, a more delicate indulgence of her sporting propensities than that she

had been just enjoying. Considerable bustle took place among the *guldens*. The archers formed themselves in files, and prepared to string their bows and fit their arrows. Many a brave heart throbbed, and sinewy arms shook nervously from anxiety, which is often, on more serious occasions, mistaken for fear. The golden vase intended for the principal prize was placed on an elevated pedestal, and surrounded by others supporting the minor rewards, in the centre of the court-yard, where the dignitaries of the court and city and the chief of the nobility were stationed. Here Van Rozenhoed and his party were allowed by special favour to enter; and proudly did he hold his head among these magnates, whom he reckoned on so soon seeing prostrate at his feet.

During the preparations for the commencement of the sport, the archduchess occupied an armed chair on a platform covered with tapestry, from which she was visible to the whole

mass of spectators that filled the Sablon and the nearest parts of the various streets that opened into it. It was arranged that she was to discharge the first quiver of three shafts, as a mark of honour to her sovereign station, and to spare her unpractised efforts the humiliation of coming after those of the many expert and experienced bowmen who meant to contest the prize. She wore the same dress in which Theresa had observed her about an hour before : it was the uniform of the company of the Holy Virgin, of which she was the peculiar patroness, although she was an honorary member of all the others as well. She rose from her chair on a signal sound of trumpets being loudly blown and echoed from the walls around. The multitude was in a moment hushed, and during her preparation a respectful silence was maintained. She took the ready strung arbalette from the hand of an attendant nobleman. Another presented to her a silver tipped arrow which she adroitly placed in the bow.

Then measuring the object high above her with keen and piercing eye, throwing her right foot back, and taking a firm and graceful attitude, she slowly raised her left arm above her head, at the same time drawing back the other, till the bow had acquired its utmost bend, and the string and feathered shaft just touched her ear, when pausing a moment for a steadier aim, she loosed her fingers from the string, and following with her gaze the arrow's upward flight, she saw it pass within a feather's breadth of the mark ; and after a few moments of perpendicular ascent, it turned point downwards, and true to the then undiscovered principle which brings all things to the earth, it sunk deep into the sandy soil at the foot of the platform.

A loud murmur of astonishment buzzed through the crowd ; but it was suppressed by respect for the performer of the feat, and by a general notion that chance rather than skill had directed the shaft. After a theatrical

pause, and flourish, and note of preparation, the archduchess again stood up, and with steady hand, firm foot, and fervid eye, she repeated her attempt. This time the arrow's point struck the small cross-bar of the vane, close to its junction with the rod, on the end of which the artificial bird was fixed, and a portion of its plumage, loosened by the shock, floated round the vane and was carried away by the wind, while the blunted arrow descended on the roof of the church.

A shout of approbation burst around, but in a moment it ceased as the self-checked crowd recollected that royalty was not held liable to those vulgar tributes of praise. Many persons on the leads of the church scrambled along the roof in rivalry to gain possession of the arrow so skilfully shot from their sovereign's hand. A great bustle took place among the courtiers. Considerable interest was excited throughout the thronged spectators. And even the archers who had before felt so anxious for their own

success now joined the sympathising crowd in prayers that the archduchess might, in her next essay, succeed in carying away the prize they had individually promised to themselves.

When Isabella next arose, her calm air of conscious skill and lofty look of indifference contrasted strongly with the intense anxiety evinced in the countenances of her subject observers. As she handled her arbalette once more, fitted her arrow in its rest, and took her final attitude and aim, a thrill was visible through the whole mass, but not a sound was heard. The whizzing flight of the shaft seemed prolonged tenfold its real extent; and thousands of eager eyes that watched it winked in agitated doubt, as they saw it strike and stick in the wooden but thick fledged effigy, which tottered on its pinnacle for an instant, and then came rolling over and over through the air, until it fell on the very steps of the platform where the archduchess stood.

Then a universal shout arose. This out-

burst of the gathering excitement was powerfully effective. It read a short loud lesson to all listeners, of the ease with which the public mind may be aroused, and of the importance which the *people's voice* can give to the most insignificant concerns. Tumultuous acclamation burst on all sides, and the whole mass was broken into enthusiastic groups, which vied with each other in the expression of their loyal delight. All notion of competition was at an end. No one thought of his own intended triumph, or rather every one felt that of the archduchess to be his. No rivalry or jealousy was felt; and in a few minutes all were deeply occupied in preparing for the grand procession to the palace to escort the archduchess, now queen of the grand guild of the arbalette, and her well won prize, for which no competitor could presume to enter the lists.

While Theresa looked on at the whole of this scene, with many a mental glance thrown back at the hostel where she had left the apprentice

at his solitary, and she thought irksome, occupation, she could not resist a sentiment of awe towards the principal actor in it, while she could not avoid admiring her confidence and skill; yet the impression made on her altogether was unpleasing, and she felt relieved when the princess was proudly borne away on a triumphal car, splendidly gilt and decorated, and followed by a long train of coaches, the various companies of archers, and the shouting mob, that brought up the rear. It was just then, as her father gave the signal to one of his attendants to have the carriage (from which he and his party had descended) drawn up at the gate of the court-yard, and as he prepared to lead the ladies from the crowd, that Theresa felt a paper placed in her hand, which hung carelessly by her side. Her fingers instinctively closed; and as she started and looked round, some dozen of faces met her gaze, all quite unknown to her, and each apparently intent on the scene. She cast her eyes down towards her still closed

hand, and she saw that a sealed letter was within it. She felt at the instant disposed to let it fall on the ground; but an impulse which we do not care minutely to define, prompted her more forcibly to retain it, and before she had time to balance the reasons and feelings for and against, her father, on whose arm she leant, hurried her away. She was soon seated in the carriage, the so strangely acquired billet carefully hidden in the folds of her richly brodered silk mantle; and a blush of consciousness of her deception colouring her ingenuous countenance.

The carriage rolled along down the narrow and steep streets that lead from the Sablon to the great square. As it was on the point of entering the latter by the eastern side of the town-house, while Theresa, notwithstanding her embarrassment, spared one admiring glance at the cluster of octagonal towers so beautifully grouped together at that part of the building, a straggling crowd was visible within

the square, and on the carriage driving into it; the whole party were more or less shocked at observing a high gibbet standing in the centre from which the figure of a man hung dangling as its legs were pushed to and fro by a group of idle boys, while several parties of elder vagabonds lounged near, and loudly laughed, or passed rude jokes at the sport.

“ 'Tis but an effigy,” cried Van Rozenhoed, as Theresa covered her eyes with her hands, and Madame Marguerite stopped her ears, lest some struggling death tones might have reached them. As Theresa raised her looks, the good dame uncovered her ears, and they all read clearly the words “ The traitor, Ivon de Bas-senveldt,” painted on a red board fastened to the top of the gibbet : and they plainly heard the proclamation of political denouncement against the living subject of this disgrace, uttered by a herald whose duty it was to rehearse the document at various periods during the continuance of the exhibition ; while before a small

altar, close beside, a monk of ferocious mien loudly recited the religious anathema, meant to give double force to the civil decree.

The effects of all this upon the various observers was widely different. Van Rozenhoed felt an involuntary shudder of superstitious dread, and thought he read in this anticipation of De Bassenveldt's fate, a probable warning of what might be his own. But still he did not shrink one instant from the purpose he had in view, or from the dangers that lay between him and it. "No," said he to himself, as the carriage went on, "no! neither rack, block, or gibbet, shall turn me back from my design."

Far different were the reflections of Nicholas Zannekin. His arrest at Bruges a few nights before, had given a considerable shock to his patriotism. The ground on which it stood seemed trembling under it, and it was utterly overthrown by the visible contemplation of their doom, dealt out even emblematically to another. He determined to take the earliest

and easiest opportunity of backing out of the conspiracy, for an entrance into which his recollection of Seneca now convinced him he had never been qualified.

Madame Marguerite, in her crude conceptions, which with persons of her class stand instead of opinions, thought that condemnation and cursing were very properly exercised against the seducer of a novice, and the instigator of a rebellion; and she, moreover, recalled to her mind many recollections of the family failings of the race of De Bassenveldt, which convinced her that its present representative had a hereditary title to be hanged, and damned into the bargain.

Theresa was deeply affected by what she gazed at and heard, with feelings of disgust and horror. The whole proceeding struck her as brutal in the extreme, and she was roused to the highest pitch of sympathy with the object of such outrageous but impotent violence. In all the varieties of feeling she had lately under-

gone relative to De Bassenveldt, she had experienced nothing which so forcibly appealed to her in his favour as this attempted dishonour upon him. Whenever she came in contact with his name, it seemed to carry some direct or negative claim upon her. The latter was strongly conveyed in the present instance ; but her alarm, on finding the train into which her thoughts were turning, was checked by one counteracting spell. The recollection of the apprentice seemed naturally to arise, to protect her from the influence of another's claim upon her heart ; and she had fully relapsed into feelings which had Lambert Boonen for their main object, when the carriage drove into the courtyard of "The Imperial Crown." She suddenly recollected the paper she held so carefully in her grasp. Hurrying to her apartment, she opened it, unperceived by Madame Marguerite or Nona, and she read as follows—

“ Trust not to appearances—your father is betrayed. Powerful agents are at work to in-

volve both him and you in dangers that can be but hinted at by the friend who writes this scrawl. Be prepared for the worst. Nor let *him* be secure, who trusts to his seeming humbleness to forward his proud hopes. Patriotism is but treason in the eye of tyranny. The boldest of your suitors is marked for destruction. Let the most artful beware ! De Bassenveldt hangs in effigy this moment, a doomed felon. Boonen may be the next victim."

This first anonymous communication which Theresa had ever received, affected her as a warning and a mystery might be expected to do to a young and ingenuous mind. She was bewildered and affrighted. An evident danger would not have produced a thousandth part the effect. She saw a menace to her father, the extent of which she knew not ; a promised peril to herself, as undefined ; and a threat, visibly meant for *him* for whom all her anxieties were alive. She thoroughly read the meaning of every allusion in the scrawl. She recalled

the prior's parting words. She was convinced that she had a friend and counsellor at hand ; and, believing that the crisis was already come in which her confessor's advice was to be acted on, she found an occasion during the preparations for dinner to shew the paper to the apprentice. She made few remarks previous to putting it into his hand ; and no sooner had she done so, than she felt overwhelmed with a sense of her boldness, and she would have given worlds to have recalled the act, even at the risk of all the threatened evil. When she ventured to raise her eyes to the apprentice's face, she almost shrunk away from its expression. She had never before seen it shew a shade of fierceness. She had seen it excited, animated, glowing—beaming with softness, and brightened, at times, by a tenderer impulse still ; but there was now a dark intensity in the eye, a stern contraction on the brow, and an eagerness in the half-opened lips, that spoke rage and vengeance, in eloquent but appalling tokens.

The apprentice caught the raised movement of Theresa's look, and saw the involuntary shock with which it instantly sank again. The whole expression of his countenance instantly changed. A smile, and a glance of gentle resolution mingled together ; and, quietly placing the paper in the breast of his doublet, he said, in an under tone,

“ Fear nought. This may mean nothing ; but it must not be despised. What it threatens I may not yet divine ; but I will watch over and protect thee. Say nought of this. It might alarm thy father ; and, mayhap, thus lead him into self-betrayal. All must be well for thee, Theresa. Heaven stands 'twixt thee and evil.”

These soothing words, and the tone and look which accompanied them, sank into our heroine's heart, and stilled its apprehensions.

CHAPTER XII.

THE remainder of this day passed over somewhat similarly to the last; and at an earlier hour than on the preceding night Van Rozenhoed and those of whom he was the political as well as parental patriarch, retired to rest. Nicholas Zannekin shrunk away the first, complaining that he was ill, and being an ill-looking confirmation of his complaint. The apprentice as he rose from the supper table, and respectfully attended the ladies to the foot of the great stair leading to the corridor where their

bed rooms were situated, took occasion to whisper, close to Theresa's ear,

“ Depend on me, in whatever may occur. Have no doubt, let appearances be what they may. I am wholly devoted to your service, and will watch your safety.”

Theresa raised her eyes full upon his face, and she saw there, by the light of the lamp which the servant carried, the same expression of deep sincerity which had so powerfully impressed itself on her mind during their short interview in the garden the night of the fête at Rozenhoed-house. But how differently did she read this countenance now ! Then its effect was like that mixture of delight and doubt produced by an interesting picture seen for the first time. Now, every line, every tint, every shadow, was familiar and dear to her. She knew them all by heart.

“ While you are near me, I have no fears for myself. I am only apprehensive for my father, and—” for you she would have added,

but the words trembled on her lips. The imagination of the apprentice caught them ere they died entirely away, and conveyed them into the reservoir of his own deep passion. Nothing more was spoken ; but an exchange of looks revealed to the self-taught lovers so many volumes of that love which only such as they can comprehend.

The next morning Van Rozenhoed was early prepared for the important business of the day. To his inquiries after the syndic, he received from him a verbal communication that he was too ill to leave his bed, and that he must therefore decline accompanying the deputation to the palace. The burgomaster, scarcely sorry to lose the presence of the timid syndic, immediately sent to require that of his apprentice and secretary. Jans Broeklaer's answer was, that on seeking Master Boonen in his chamber, he was not to be found, and that from the state of his bed, it was clear he had not occupied it the last night ; nor did any of

the inhabitants of the hostel know aught of his movements from the time of his quitting the supper table.

“Aha ! is it so ?” said the burgomaster, in half audible soliloquy : “A sly gallant ! the deeper the river the smoother the stream, saith the old proverb. But the boy is young, and we must not betray this little peccadillo to his reverence the prior. I hope *his* constant prayers and the blessing of Saint Andrew hover over us to-day ! Jans, let Master Boonen attend me the moment of his return to the hostel. And mind you, remark nought of his sleeping abroad to your young mistress or Madame Marguerite. It is not necessary to excite curiosity or awaken scandal, the two main failings of the sex.”

“I hope this Master Boonen has not done both already,” muttered Jans, who had his own reasons for what he said.

Breakfast passed over, noon arrived, dinner was served up and dispatched, the members

of the deputation gathered in groups at this rendezvous where their leader awaited them; the carriages were ordered, all was ready for departure towards the palace—but yet the apprentice came not.

“ Never fear, my dear father, do not doubt him, he is the soul of honour and fidelity—I vouch for him!” exclaimed Theresa, as Van Rozenhoed impatiently paced the private chamber occupied by her and Madame Marguerite, while the chief saloon was filled by the Bruges deputies whom the burgomaster had quitted for awhile, in order to consult his daughter, or rather to vent his suspicions to her on the subject of the apprentice’s absence.

“ Methinks you answer boldly for the youth, Theresa; more boldly than mayhap beseems a maiden of eighteen.”

“ Nay, chide me not, father; care for thy well-being gives me energy, but do not call it boldness. He cannot fail thee at a time like this.”

“ Indeed, Theresa, love,” said Madame

Marguerite, "thou art indiscreet to give the warrant of thy word for a man, particularly for one not highly born—that is to say, of positively mean descent. Now the Boonens, though respectable folk, have no claims to birth. In truth, the only one of them at all known in heraldry, is Barbara Boonen, and that in right of her husband Peter Peckins, the late Chancellor of Brabant, and the only existing person of the name, of any note, is James Boonen, Abbot of Avordale, who they say is likely to be Archbishop of Louvain."

"Tell me, Theresa," said Van Rozenhoed, who had keenly watched Theresa's countenance, while Madame Marguerite spoke, "tell me, on what authority do you so warmly guarantee the fidelity of this young man?"

"On that of your friend, my confessor, his own uncle the prior," replied Theresa, in an animated tone.

"Umph! His reverence recommended this Lambert to you then?"

“ Oh, yes ! most strongly, as a stanch and steady friend,—as his second self.”

“ Indeed ? and have you no further pledge for him ?”

“ I have, I have, my father. One stronger still—his own word. His solemn promise to be near me in this day of danger.”

“ *Of danger*, child ? What mean you ?”

“ What I can conceal no more from you, my father, even though *he* cautioned me against alarming you by what may, after all, mean nothing. Here, read this, and be on your guard, as Lambert—as Master Boonen is absent, and you must meet the peril for awhile without his aid. I cannot longer keep from you what I have already shewn to him.”

“ Why, this *is* strange, indeed ! What may it mean ? Whence comes it ?”

Theresa told the manner in which she became possessed of the paper, which she had handed to her father.

“ And hadst thou no qualms, Theresa, in

shewing to this youth a scroll which designated such a one as he is for a lover of such as thou art?"

"His lover! What do you say, kinsman? Lover! Heaven and the saints forbid! A Boonen make love to a Van Rozenhoed—to say nothing of a Lovenskerke! Oh, shocking! What is all this mystery? What danger threatens us?" rapidly exclaimed Madame Marguerite, closely hugging Fanchon in her arms.

"Sir," said Theresa, heedless of her kinswoman's apostrophes and questions—"I had all the feelings stirring in my breast which modesty might engender and pride acknowledge. But duty towards you, and charity towards him, prompted the course I took, and which my conscience does not condemn."

"My child, I blame thee not," said the burgomaster, at once satisfied and softened by the high bearing of his daughter. "Besides, there is no time now to lose in vain discussions; I must be prompt and resolute. I know not

what hangs over me. Let me be cautious too, as far as may be. The influence this young man has so soon gained over you was partly submitted to by me ; I trusted all to him. Heaven grant him honest. Papers of vast importance—enough, Theresa, to involve thy father's safety and to commit his life, are in the keeping of this youth. Let me hasten to search his chamber, and see that they are safe."

With these words, Van Rozenhoed stepped across the corridor of the chamber occupied by his apprentice, while Theresa stood fixed in speechless anxiety. Madame Marguerite walked up and down, loquaciously holding forth in a mixture of mysterious dread and violent indignation, at the doubly hinted danger and dishonour to herself, her friends, her family, and Fanchon. The burgomaster returned in a few minutes, empty handed, and said, in a low and gloomy tone.

"Not one line is left. I have opened his valisse, he has taken all."

Theresa felt her cheeks grow chill, as the breath of fear sucked their bloom away.

“ I am wholly in this young man’s power ; but it is now too late to recede. Perhaps I wrong him,” said the father.

Theresa would have said, “ You do,” could she have commanded the utterance of even two short words. But she was dumb—not from doubt of Lambert’s honour, but from fear for his safety. The danger might have reached him the first ; and instead of being employed in watching over her and her father’s fate, he might at the moment have sunk under that with which the scroll had threatened him.

“ Might not this warning have been written by himself ? By him have been dexterously placed within thy hand ?”—said the burgo-master.

Theresa felt a new shock—but still it was not doubt. She remembered the look that was excited by Lambert’s perusal of the billet ; and in the double confidence of purity and love,

she never imagined that even a look like that might be assumed.

“May not all this have been worked up, to turn suspicion from him? Can he have entered my house and crept into my confidence, to destroy the father the easier to gain his child?”

“Oh, father, father,” exclaimed Theresa, a burst of passionate tears flowing with the words, “what monstrous thoughts are these! How can you let your mind be warped at a time like this, when every faculty and feeling should be steady and secure? If falsehood threatens you, be prepared for it, but deem not that it lurks in the breast of honour’s self. On my part be at least assured I will not quit thee for an hour. I will go with thee to this counsel, will stand beside thee in the perilous task thou hast undertaken, and if the danger is to be met even at the foot of the archdukes’ throne, there even will I brave it with thee, in spite and in defiance of treachery and tyranny both.”

“My dearest child, my own Theresa!” cried the burgomaster, clasping her in his arms, “nothing can harm thy angel purity; but thou shalt run no risk that prudence may avert. Thou shalt accompany me, not to the foot of the throne, for that thou canst not do; but to the palace, to the antichamber of the council-room thou mayst come; and there, in thy domino and montero hat, in the character of my secretary, which another should have filled, thou shalt wait the issue of our conference with our imperious masters, in the safe care of faithful Jans Broeklaer.”

“Oh, father!” interrupted Theresa, as a pang of recollection and conviction shot athwart her brain. The listening scene she witnessed on the memorable night of the fête rose full before her, and not a shade of doubt remained as to the source of the danger in which her father was enveloped. But before she could utter another word, loud calls for the burgomaster burst from his impatient friends; the

trumpets of departure sounded from the guard of honour sent from the palace to escort the deputation ; the chimes from the great clock sounded the quarter which preceded the hour of two ; and Van Rozenhoed's firmness and courage rose with the approach of the longed-for scene.

“Hurry on thy cloak and hat, Theresa,” cried he. “Come on, come on, my girl ! All this may be but fancy, playing us some wild freak. Lambert may still appear. Let's not anticipate evils that may never exist. But be it as it may, nothing must shake me now. Farewell, Madame Marguerite ! We shall soon return to you. Be of good cheer for an hour, and be ready to hail us with kind greeting. Now then, my child, away.”

With these words he hastened down the broad stone stair-case of the hostel, and was in a few minutes seated in his carriage, his pretended secretary at his side, and the whole procession in full departure for the palace. The sight was

striking and impressive. In addition to the display for the yesterday's drive, already detailed, were now to be added the presence of upwards of twenty members of the deputation, following in double files, on horses richly caparisoned, the burgomaster's carriage. Each cavalier was followed by his varlet on foot; and both master and domestics were habited in the most costly and showy suits of their various wardrobes. The dress worn by Van Rozenhoed was particularly splendid. His doublet was of dove-coloured mohair, richly worked with gold and silver lace. His pourpoint of gold brocade, his mantle of green velvet, lined with cloth of gold, and bordered with several rows of gold lace and points of green and flame-coloured silk; while a row of pearls garnished its collar, which was fastened by a diamond agraffe. A frill of the finest Mechlin lace hung low on his neck. His green velvet cap was shaded by a profusion of ostrich plumes, and the remainder of his suit was in keeping with

the parts already described. The other proud Flemings attempted no rivalry with this surpassing display ; but they were all attired in the style of ostentatious expense for which their city had ever been famous.

The States General of Brabant and Flanders were at that epoch assembled in Brussels, having been just then called together by the archdukes, to discuss the critical circumstances of the country, and furnish the supplies which a continuance of the war with Holland so largely required. They were composed of the wealthiest nobles of the different districts still under the domination of Spain ; and they formed a parody on representative government in perfect keeping with the mockery of an independent state, such as these countries were assumed to be, under the delegated sovereignty of Albert and Isabella. The chief business of such a parliament was to meet now and then, and vote as they were ordered ; to attend the court, and amuse themselves as best they

might. The occasion presented by the Bruges deputation was not to be lost on the main body of these political automatons ; and they almost to a man assembled in the court-yard and outer lobbies of the palace to witness the approach of Van Rozenhoed and his friends.

The mixture of costumes of these provincialists was highly picturesque. The Flemings chiefly wore velvet mantles of the gaudiest colours and richest bindings, with caps of the same, or of silk, garnished with plumes. The deputies from Antwerp, and those parts which bordered on Holland, were distinguished by their black suits, their formal ruffs, slouched grey hats, boots of untanned leather, and the hanging sleeves of their short cloaks. The nobles of Hainault and Brabant were remarkable among the rest for their bold and warlike air, and the mingled lightness and good taste of their attire ; and not a few realized the description given by Roger Ascham of the English gallants of those days, whose pride

was “to beare a brave looke, to weare a slovenlie buskin; as though out of everie haire toppe should suddainlie starte a good bigge oath.”

Not a few Jesuits and inquisitors, in their gloomy robes, were sprinkled among the different groupes, through which they glided in silence, listening to catch some stray expression of political or sectarian heresy.

Within the more private precincts of the court, the archdukes, the ministers, the secret council, and all the subordinate hangers on of royalty, offered a wide contrast to those without. Albert and Isabella, not content with the essentials of decorum and morality, of which they set a sincere example, had hedged themselves round in entrenchments of Spanish reserve and etiquette, that threw a sombre and hypocritical air on all within the palace walls, irksome to the courtiers and revolting to the public.

Albert, who was son of the emperor Maxi-

milian, and nephew of the odious tyrant Philip the Second of Spain, whose daughter he had married, was a man of talent and virtue, but tainted with the bigotry and gloom of his royal patron, and of his religion. In the field he was a valiant and enterprising captain. In his five years' government of Portugal, he had proved himself a profound politician; and when he entered on his sovereignty of the Netherlands, and resolved on marriage, he renounced and solemnly deposed his cardinal's hat (with which, though not a priest, he had been invested at the age of nineteen) on the altar of the Virgin, at Halle, near Brussels. Notwithstanding these tokens of a vigorous mind, he strictly adhered to the contemptible forms with which Christianity was defaced, and was deeply infected with the spirit of persecution which defiled it. In manner he was cold, haughty, and taciturn, and consequently unpopular. His wife was undoubtedly a superior character, for

possessing in a high degree his virtues and almost all his masculine attributes, she mingled with them a suavity and grace that secured, with the respect due to her dignity and esteem for her qualities, feelings of warm and general affection.

Van Rozenhoed's carriage advanced with some difficulty up the steep and ill paved street which ran half way up the hill of Caudenberg, afterwards called, in its finished state, the Montagne de la Cour, on the ascent of which the palace of the governors of Brabant was situated; and it stopped at a low arched door-way in the northern side of the building, which still may be seen, decorated by a mutilated figure in relief of St. George and his equally headless and immortal dragon, in a small square niche close by. It was by this door that such deputations were admitted; the larger portal, higher up the hill (and still existing) being reserved for the entry of monarchs, ambassadors, and the

members of the States General. A narrow stair admitted to a range of corridors and galleries communicating with the state apartments ; but all of these that escaped the great fire which destroyed the body of the building in 1731, are now occupied—*sic transit gloria palladii*—as store-houses for a wine dealer, and an ironmonger's shop ! while the very wall of the building (the height and solidity of which gives a good notion of what the imposing mass must once have been) is hidden from the view of the unexploring passenger by a row of insignificant houses, that disfigures and makes dangerous the main approach to the splendid square which crowns the summit of the hill.

The deputation was soon in the ante-chamber of the palace, and passed successively on, through sundry saloons and cabinets, to the very verge of the council-room. Van Rozenhoed's courage rose with each new impediment which court formalities placed in the way of plain

speaking and direct justice ; and he and his companions, to whom he imparted much of his own spirit, felt no small contempt for the solemn fopperies or gloomy insolence of the many functionaries who obstructed their path.

“ Well, my friends,” exclaimed the burgo-master, in Flemish, as the last of the ushers, grooms, and chamberlains, left them at the innermost entrance of their final halting place and went in to announce their attendance, — “ well, my friends ! who would exchange the honest independence of a Flemish burgher for all the trumpery parade of these Spanish dons ? But cheer up ; this may be our last appearance in this character, and on such a stage.”

The deputies received this speech with a smile, and exchanged significant and self-satisfied looks with each other. It produced exactly the same effect on the countenances of two inquisitors, who stood close by the entrance to the council-room. Van Rozenhoed had taken

them for Spaniards, and he was right; but he had not considered the probability of their understanding the language in which he spoke, which they did, however, perfectly.

The chamberlain now returned, and loudly called for the burgomaster, eschevins, and other deputies of Bruges, to enter the presence chamber, and present the petition on behalf of their fellow citizens. Upon this call Van Rozenhoed put himself at the head of the others, and moved forwards; first giving an affectionate glance at Theresa, who sat down trembling on a chair presented by an attendant, as her father pointed her out to the chamberlain as the secretary of the deputation, and requested that fitting accommodation of writing materials might be afforded in case of necessity. A stiff bow of assent answered this demand, and the deputation moved on.

The door opened into a large and lofty hall, divided in the centre by a screen of carved oak, with huge folding doors, which expanded wide

from the ceiling to the floor, and back to the walls at either side. The first division of this spacious apartment was covered with tapestry. Ranged in lines down the centre were the royal halberdiers in gaudy uniforms, with a double row of courtiers of different grades in the service of the archdukes, who had assembled, some from duty, some from curiosity, to witness the scene. In the vista beyond this long avenue of heads and beards, Van Rozenhoed's eyes fixed upon the throne which was placed at the farthest end of the inner compartment of the hall: and there he saw, seated in his robes of state, the somewhat diminutive person of Albert, and in her place beside him was she who was in every sense of the word his better half. The throne, like the chamber in which it stood, was hung with black velvet; which, added to the gravity of the archduke's countenance, and those of the council of state, who took their tone and air from him, gave a peculiarly sombre effect to the whole scene. The council

table was in front of the throne ; and the personal appearance and ermined robes of the members, who occupied low stools at either side of it, were congenial to the harsh and gloomy combination presented equally by men and things. The council was almost entirely composed of Spaniards. Francisco di Mendoza, Admiral of Arragon, particularly odious at that time for his recent cruelties in the invasion of the neutral German States, was conspicuous by his haggard and ferocious look. Gonzalez Carillo, Baptista Tassis, and Zeronimo Zaputa were the other chief members of the government ; and there were besides, La Barlotte, a fierce Walloon, notorious for his violent and enterprising spirit, with a few of more or less importance to the state.

As the chamberlain advanced between the files of courtiers, announcing the title of Van Rozenhoed, who followed at a few paces distance, the latter, with an apparently careless air, (but as the observers shrewdly suspected

designedly,) laid hold of the collar of his own mantle and shook it, as if to arrange it more commodiously on his shoulders. As he did so, the string by which the row of pearls was fastened gave way, and the precious ornaments fell scattered on the floor, and rolled at the feet of the courtiers who had been gazing with admiration on the burgomaster's rich apparel. Several of them stooped and picked up a number of the pearls, which they offered, with an over-strained politeness, to their owner. But he, returning their complaisance by a stretch of arrogance full as affected as extravagant, entreated that each would retain for himself the gems so courteously restored, "as a poor token of a Flemish goldbeater's sense of the honour they had so done him." While all were struck with astonishment at this munificent proposal, and before the individual traits of avarice, pride, or generosity had time to prompt the courtiers to accept, reject, or render an equivalent for the proffered gifts, Van Rozenhoed

moved on, followed by his friends, each of whom felt the full influence of this haughty profusion. When they all arrived close to the council table, and stood in front of the throne, they presented a spectacle of evident wealth and pride, that could not fail to produce a powerful effect on all present, from the monarchs down to the door-keepers.

It was signified to Van Rozenhoed that their highnesses were ready to hear his complaints; and as he bowed with due reverence, and prepared to speak, the folding doors were closed, and all excluded from the audience but the official attendants. It would therefore ill become us to render minutely public the details of the burgomaster's accusation against Trovaldo, and the archduke's brief reply; particularly as neither are of any great importance to the progress of our tale. Official memorials and answers have been, in all times and countries, pretty nearly the same. The petitioners and the prince have their parts assigned, and

know their speeches by rote ; and those in question differed in no essential from their prototypes. It is enough to say that Van Rozenhoed clearly and resolutely explained the griefs complained of by the city of which he was the organ ; and that Albert, with rigid dignity, promised inquiry and justice, according to the laws whose distributor he was. The archdukes then rose from their seats, and retired to an adjoining apartment, followed by the members of the council ; while Van Rozenhoed and his friends, in increasing spirits as their work proceeded, withdrew in the order they had advanced, as the folding doors opened again to allow their progress.

But a very pleasing change of scenery met their view as they passed on to the outer compartment of the hall. A table had been prepared with great celerity and perfect silence, loaded with a costly collation of fruits, conserves, confectionery, wine and cordials. More than twenty covers were placed on the board,

being one for each member of the deputation; and a cloth-covered bench was placed at each side, the luxury of high backed chairs being not even then in common use for the ordinary accommodation. Cushions, however, were rarely dispensed with; and Van Rozenhoed's pride and eye being both quickened to the observance of small slights by the ceremonious honours done to him in the palace, he was resolved to give a new instance of his spirit, to the courtiers who still lingered in the hall, and the numerous official persons who attended at the repast. This was presided by the Marquess of Assembourg, the senior of the score of *hoofred-naers*, or hereditary receivers of the revenues attached to the household of the archdukes, as successors to the Counts of Flanders by whom these feudal offices were instituted. When this venerable placeman requested Van Rozenhoed and his friends to be seated, the burgomaster, giving a significant gesture to the rest, unclasped the diamond fastening of

his cloak and laid the magnificent garment on the bench, and sat down on it, unmindful of the injury it sustained. The others, with more or less compunction, followed his example, and thus gave a tacit reproof to the want of consideration with which they thought proper to feel themselves treated. The chief functionary, taking possession of his round stool at the head of the table, either did not understand or chose to pass unnoticed this arrangement of his guests ; nor was it remarked by his well-bred and noble associates, the hereditary “ butler,” “ cellar-man,” “ master of the pantry,” and the rest, who aided their chief in doing the honours of the board.

Long ere the deputies had rendered a Flemish account of the repast, Van Rozenhoed was satisfied, anxiety to be again with Theresa, and to communicate to her his distinguished treatment, overcoming his appetite. As soon as a fitting time of ceremony had elapsed, he arose from table ; and after an exchange

of compliments with the functionaries before mentioned, he and his companions prepared to follow their old leader the chamberlain, the Marquess of Assembourg formally and consequentially saying,

“ The burgomaster and citizens of the good town of Bruges having received the honours due to their station, and the ordinary rites of hospitality, at the hands of our sovereign lieges the archdukes, their further care and treatment, as seems good to their highnesses, is confided to the marshal of the palace.”

A final bow of acknowledgment was made by the elated burgomaster ; and he led the way towards the door, uttering a few rapid words in Flemish, which his companions clearly understood and approved of ; for they to a man took their cue from him, and each left his mantle on the seat where they had so indifferently used them. Upon seeing this, a solemn titter ran through the files of courtiers, who

imagined the deputation to be so agitated by their contact with the court as to have forgotten the costly cloaks which they thus abandoned. One of the hoofrednaers, the youngest of the party, and the court fop *par excellence*, stalked after the deputies; and stroking his infant beard with one hand, he tapped Van Rozenhoed on the shoulder with the other, and said with solemn gravity, in French, although the Spanish language was spoken chiefly at court, "If the right worshipful burgomaster and his most worthy fellow citizens may, without offence, be deemed capable of a lapse of memory, I should make bold to say that such has occurred to them at present, in the circumstance of their having (in a perhaps not unnatural abstraction) forgotten to resume the splendid outward coverings which they whilome sat upon on yonder benches."

"Sir," answered Van Rozenhoed, in portly pride and in the same language in which he

was addressed, “the burghers of Bruges can least of all forget what is due to their own dignity. They never condescend, when retiring from a feast, to carry away the cushions they have reposed on.”

CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER the delivery of the retort, which has been since celebrated in the pages of more than one historian, Van Rozenhoed strode towards the door ; and he could not resist throwing an inquiring glance around, to mark the effect produced by his words.

He observed, instead of the profound respect he reckoned on, a general expression of irony on the faces of the courtiers ; and in those of the two inquisitors who had mingled with the rest, he read as many not to be mistaken docu-

ments of malignant delight. Their sinister looks made him shudder ; but his heart fearlessly rose up to meet the doubt that seemed to press on it, and he passed with a firm step into the ante-chamber where he had left Theresa an hour before. His searching eye rested upon her cloak-wrapped form, in the same place in which he had deposited her, the cap, which hung designedly low on her brow, having effectually concealed her features. He was advancing towards her, and she simultaneously rising to meet him, when they were prevented from an exposure of feeling, which the callous corruption of a court would have seen to be ridiculous, by the sudden bursting open of a door opposite to the one which led to the presence-chamber, and the entrance of a ruffian-looking officer, armed cap-a-pie, followed by a rush of armed men. The officer, stepping fiercely up, placed himself between the father and daughter, and laying a hand on the shoulder of each, he exclaimed, in Flemish,

“ I, Gerard Abramzoon, deputy-marshal of the palace, arrest you, Zhegher Van Rozenhoed, and you, Lambert Boonen, on charge of treason against the state. Guards, lead them away ; and you all, other citizens of Bruges, are also my prisoners, compromised as accomplices in the crime of the chief conspirators.”

Van Rozenhoed was utterly overthrown by this shock. Notwithstanding Theresa's warning, the apprentice's desertion and the syndic's abandonment, the blow seemed to meet him wholly unprepared. With the usual fatuity of temperaments naturally brave and sanguine, all these indications of danger were forgotten or disregarded ; and he had held his course in inflated elevation till the storm gathered round him in the atmosphere which seemed the purest, and the bolt struck him in the very midst of sunshine. He heard his own name pronounced, coupled with the charge of treason ; he felt the marshal's gauntlet rest heavily on his shoulder ; he stood for a moment aghast ; and was awoke

to the true sense of his situation by the soldier's seizing his sword, and dragging him forward. At the same moment, two other of these myrmidons laid hold of Theresa, and hurried her towards the door. She did not for an instant lose her presence of mind; her heart was too full to afford a place to fear. She was influenced by the hope of being left with her father, and that of successfully personating Lambert Boonen, and giving him more time for escape. She therefore silently rose and approached Van Rozenhoed, to whisper a word or two of encouragement and caution in his ear. But his eye no sooner caught her figure than the parent's feeling overcame the feelings of the man; he shook away the weakness that had for a moment paralyzed him, and clasped his daughter in his arms, exclaiming, in broken accents,

“ My child, my child ! the blow is already struck—the hour is come. What have I done ? how have I risked thy safety ? who now is to protect thee ? O what a guilty wretch I am ! ”

“ Take down his words,” muttered an inquisitor, “ he confesses his guilt.”

“ What does he mean ?” cried Abramzoon ; “ his child ! have we not here his secretary, the traitor Boonen ?”

“ Yes, yes,” said Theresa, wrapping her cloak still closer round her, “ I am Lambert Boonen. He calls me his child from affection. Away, away ! take us to our prison.”

“ Child or secretary, man or woman—for your voice and your size make it doubtful which—you are at any rate my prisoner ; but you do not accompany the honest burgomaster : he goes to the Halle-gate—you to the Amigo,”* said the deputy-marshal.

“ Oh, no no ! we must go together—one dungeon will serve us both—you cannot, must not part us,” sobbed Theresa, in imploring tones.

“ Away with them, nor let their highnesses’ rest be disturbed by this tumult !” fiercely cried

* The chief prisons of Brussels in those days : the former still exists, a frightful monument of deep suffering and bad taste.

the marshal, and the soldiers again laid hands on Theresa, when Van Rozenhoed, his hardy spirit recovering from its first shock, and roused to desperation, grasped one of the rude arms that had seized her's, and dashing the ruffian aside, he called aloud,

“Release her ! At your peril touch her not again ! It is a woman, it is my daughter you would seize !” and to stop the rising brutality of the soldiers and their chief, he tore open the mantle that Theresa grasped with both hands ; and he next flung her cap from her head with such force, that her beautiful tresses fell round her face and far down her shoulders, and she stood confessed in all the exquisite graces of womanhood and beauty.

“Now, ye tools of tyranny, do ye believe your own eyes ?” continued the exasperated father. “And you reverend instruments of bigotry, who disgrace the creed ye preach, and that I revere, what do ye say to this ? Will you drag a parent from his child, and

leave a being like that the victim of treachery and power?"

"Away with him!" vociferated Abramzoon—"let the damsel remain!" and several of the soldiers violently separated Van Rozenhoed from Theresa's embrace, and dragged him on.

"Oh! men of Bruges," cried he, "must this be borne? Are your strong arms unnerved, and your bold hearts frozen? Can ye see this sight and stand still? Rescue!—rescue!"

Roused from their stupified inaction by this appeal, the deputies gathered round, and several of them, as yet not disarmed, drew their swords, and pushed through the halberdiers.

"Soldiers, do your duty! Down with these rebel dogs! Cut them down every man, but spare the girl!" hoarsely cried the marshal; and in a moment more, rapiers and pikes were clashing, and three or four

combatants on either side had measured their length on the floor. During the preceding altercation several of the courtiers had crowded in from the hall and presence-chamber ; but now that matters had actually come to blows, the greater part of these rapidly retreated, and were met by others rushing from the penetralia of the palace, into the very heart of which the uproar had entered. Among the latter was the old Marquess of Assembourg, who well knew the catastrophe that was preparing for his quondam guests at the very time he was pledging their healths in treacherous bumpers. He was now despatched to see if the work was consummated ; and on entering the ante-room, which presented a scene of violence and blood, he loudly proclaimed peace in the name of the archdukes, who were, he avowed, within hearing of this outrageous affray. But his proclamation had been unattended to, had not overwhelming reinforce-

ments of the guard succeeded in disarming and securing every member of the deputation.

Theresa, who had clung to her father, and saved him by the sacredness of the female form from the brandished weapons of the soldiers, no sooner saw that the frantic attempt of her friends was quelled, and the way cleared for the performance of a sudden resolution, than she sprang across the floor, through the entrance to the great hall, and rushing unobstructed past the astonished groups that were scattered in the presence-chamber, she never stopped till she reached the archduchess in the private room beyond; where she no sooner beheld her, surrounded by a number of men, whom she knew not nor cared for, than she threw herself on her knees, and convulsively caught the princess's robes.

“ Mercy, mercy !” exclaimed she, “ mercy for my father ! Oh ! save him, save him ! They drag him away to ignominy and death !

I call on you, as a woman, not to shut your heart to my cry for mercy !”

Had an angel dropped from heaven, the faces of those present could not have shewn greater signs of astonishment and admiration. But even if the miracle had been such, the courtiers would, as in the present case, have restrained every verbal expression of their feelings, until they were quite satisfied as to those of the sovereigns. Albert, who stood close to his wife, looked little moved, but rapidly asked who the young person was. Nobody could answer the question ; but Isabella, following the kind impulse of her heart, waited for no reply ; but raising Theresa up, she graciously smiled, and mildly but firmly said—

“ Be composed, child !—be you or your father who ye may, have no fears of violence. I promise you protection for yourself and justice for him.”

“ Oh, Madam, they drag him this moment to his dungeon ! Let *me* go there as well—’tis

all I ask ; but do not part us ! Oh ! come, I beseech, I implore you, come, and see that they do him no harm.”

The archduchess, gently resisting Theresa’s efforts to lead her from the room, spoke again, with increasing benevolence and animation —

“ You ask impossibilities, child ; but I swear to you, by the honour of a princess, and the faith of a Christian woman, your father shall suffer no wrong ! Your highness,” added she, turning towards Albert, “ confirms my orders ? ”

Albert, by expressive gestures, gave his full assent ; and at the moment the Marquess of Assembourg entered and reported that the refractory burghers were all secured.

“ Then go, Don Zeronimo Zaputa,” resumed Isabella, “ attend in person to the treatment of these prisoners all, and see them honourably used. Who is your father, my fair maid ? ”

“ The Burgomaster of Bruges,” replied Theresa, somewhat reassured by the princess’s

manner, and by seeing the minister profoundly bow and hasten away in pursuance of her orders.

“What! are you then this celebrated heiress, this perverse maiden, who will not list the offers of alliance from nobles and gallant soldiers, but rather choose to lend an ear to the coarse addresses of base churls, heretics, and conspirators? We were half-inclined to retract our promise of favour from so truant a suppliant, and so hard hearted withal to the sorrowful complaints of others.”

Theresa, unacquainted with the bantering style of princes, took this speech at the letter, and felt her heart sink again, as she said,

“Oh, do not, Madam, withdraw your protection from me. Take pity on me, and give me some hope in this hour of trial. That I am that hapless heiress is no fault of mine, and as for the rest, I am not, indeed I am not, hard hearted. They belie me to your highness, who say I am such; nor do these suitors merit kind-

ness or compassion ; they seek my wealth, not my heart. Oh, let them take it all, so that my poor father is but safe, and I allowed to share his captivity and his danger, be it what it may.”

“ Well, well, cheer up, soothe these alarms,” replied Isabella, in all her former kindness of accent and look—“ you shall not be abandoned ; and again I promise you, your father shall have impartial justice.”

“ Oh, but if justice be but another word for punishment ? if—”

“ Nay, nay, we cannot now discuss such critical points,” said Isabella, seeing that the archduke was impatient of the scene, and that he was retiring to his private cabinet with some of the ministers—“ time presses, and this affair that implicates your father is one of serious moment, more than perhaps you know of.”

“ Oh ! no, Madam, I know it all—all that my father or Master Lambert Boonen know. If they are guilty, so am I. Let me share all

my father's sufferings, be they what they may? Please Heaven, Master Boonen has escaped !”

These ingenuous revelations, of even more than Theresa intended to confess, at once amused and interested the archduchess.

“ So then, it appears,” said she, “ that the reports of this dangerous Master Boonen are not beyond the truth? We must, I see, protect you against him.”

“ Against *him* ! Oh, Heavens, Madam, how little do you know him ! He is my best friend—he would die for me !”

“ Live for you, rather, or much I doubt me. But no more of him. Your thoughts must turn from such ignoble churls. And mark me now, Theresa—young, artless, exposed to danger as you are, it is our duty, as our will, to cherish and protect you. Proofs of your father's treason are too evident to leave it in doubt. This secretary, or apprentice, or whatever he may be, is involved in all ; and

much I grieve me to add, so is one whose duty to our holy faith and his own sacred calling should have kept him pure. The Prior of St. Andrews is, as thy father, a prisoner, detained in arrest in his own priory. This nephew of his, this Boonen, cannot long elude the active search of our officers, if, indeed, he be not already secured."

A deep sigh from Theresa followed this climax of ill bodings.

"Nay, sigh not, fair maiden," continued the princess; "it is well to let you know the truth of your situation, that you may weigh the value of the remedy for all these ills. All the ramifications of this dark conspiracy are known to my august spouse and to myself through the zeal of our ministers and the fidelity of our servants. The most daring accomplice of these crimes, the bold and bad De Bassenveldt, outlawed and proscribed, is on the eve of paying a terrible retribution! We have heard much of your concerns of late. We know

how you are beset by artful profligates ; but the care we owe to the children of the state, includes all without distinction. We wish you well : nor do we feel disposed to punish with extremest rigour any but the base in mind and bad in heart. Your father comes not in that list ; and if you would at once join your duty to him with obedience to our will, an oblivious veil may perhaps be drawn across his error, and all may yet be well."

" Oh, Madam," cried the impatient girl, no longer able to restrain her anxious feelings, " oh, tell me when, where, or how I may fly to obey the condition that can lead to such unhoped-for happiness ? I am ready on the instant !"

" Then stand aside, Señors," cried the archduchess, in a lively and almost triumphant tone, to the ministers and official attendants who still remained in the room, " stand aside, and let this lovely maiden see the path that leads to her own happiness and her father's freedom."

And at this command, the dark and dingy looking beings that had stood scowling, as Theresa thought, upon her, opened back to the right and left, and displayed to her view a person who had before kept out of sight, and whose handsome person and apparel shewed a brilliant contrast to their gloom. At the first glance she did not recognise him; but a second told her it was no other than Lyderic de Roulemonde who stood revealed to her. Notwithstanding all his personal advantages, and what he reckoned on as powerful auxiliaries to them, namely, his many-coloured doublet embroidered in gold, his silk scarf with diamond aiguillettes, his fringe of silver points round skirts and knees, like the glass drops of a candelabra, and the other accessories of his dress, in spite of all, Theresa viewed him with inexpressible repugnance. Whether this was produced by the sinister expression of his eye, by the occasional impressions which had been made on her not unfavourable to his avowed rival De Bassenveldt,

or by the still more powerful leaning towards Lambert Boonen, it is not easy to say. All perhaps combined together, and the effect was irresistible. Theresa felt faint and nervous as the archduchess beckoned Lyderic forward, and spoke as he advanced,

“ Advance, Baron de Roulemonde, and let this fair maid look on the alternative which, methinks, she may without shuddering adopt. Here, Theresa, here is the remedy for all. This brave, this virtuous baron, whose zeal for the state has discovered and broken up this vile confederacy into which your father has been entrapped, demands but one reward for his inestimable services. You are the only prize he looks for in life, and we have promised you to him. Placed near our person in a station of high honour, for such we destine you to, you shall be the grace of our court, and the charm of all eyes. Your father shall be forgiven and taken high into our favour. His fortune shall be secure, his name not disho-

noured, his reputation unsullied. And we promise, even before you ask the boon, to extend our pardon to the prior and his nephew, in whose fate I perceive you condescend to take some interest. Such are the terms we offer to you, as the means of felicity to yourself and others. We scarcely look for any demur or doubt on your part."

During this speech, Theresa endured a conflict of feelings we shall not attempt to describe. The reader, to whom her character must now be known, will perceive that Isabella had touched every spring that could move both its strong and weak points. It need not be stated here that the weaker (which ought to be the worser) often overpower the better, in such struggles. But it must not be inferred that that was exactly the case at present, from the fact of a new defect being at the moment engendered in our heroine's mind—at least a new evil, which severity itself will excuse, if it cannot quite approve. It was, in the plain

sense of the term, hypocrisy ; but in that modified form, which the conventional language (and we may add, the inevitable corruptions of society) softens down and justifies under the term dissimulation. Had Theresa boldly and energetically said to the archduchess, “No ; I reject your conditions—I dare the consequences—let my father and my friends all perish—let me be doomed to risk and ruin—I brave it all !” she might have appeared more sublime, and fitter for a state of stubborn, unclad veracity ; but we hope she will not seem less amiable, and assuredly she was more natural, as but one of a system where not even thought goes naked, in suppressing her true feelings, and wearing an apparent consent to Isabella’s proposition. She had, at any rate, no time for reflection ; and she answered with a hesitation that it would not be fair to attribute entirely to deceit,

“Your highness’s proposal is one of great moment. I am sensible—deeply so—of the real condescension that can make you look from

your high station on the fate of a person so humble as I am. But you will not refuse me a little time for reflection, for consultation with my father, on what so much involves him as well as me. I ask no more than to see him, and communicate your highness's proposal and this gentleman's intentions."

"You are a prudent and sensible young person," said the archduchess, graciously, and not a little pleased with the tact by which she was convinced she had effected such submissive compliance in Theresa's mind; "your request is but reasonable, and a hastier answer would have been indelicate. You shall have all due consideration for your situation and feelings. Our worthy and gallant old friend and servant there, the Marquess of Assembourg, will take you in his charge. His house is hard by our palace, and in it you will find every suitable accommodation and care. And to prove to you that we have anticipated all these results, though your abrupt appearance here took us

somewhat by surprise, you will find your kinswoman and chaperone already established in the marquess's house, with your own attendant and such of your father's household as he may not need in the secure retreat which it is necessary he should occupy for a while. Baron de Roulemonde here, will maintain a strict decorum in those visits, which, as your affianced husband, he will from time to time pay you. You are under my special guardianship till your nuptials are celebrated."

Theresa shuddered as the archduchess spoke. She was, for an instant, tempted to throw herself once more at her feet, and pray for mercy. But she maintained her presence of mind, bowed low, but spoke not. Lyderic advanced, dropped on one knee, and profoundly bent his body, an emblem of the crooked mind that prompted the servile movement. He rose again, took Theresa's shrinking hand in his, and pressed it to his lips; then raised his eyes—which, though well coloured and shaped, were

eyes that never *beamed*—and threw a twinkling look of pleasure on what he made sure was now his prize.

After some further gracious expressions, meant to reassure our heroine, the archduchess gave her over into the care of the Marquess of Assembourg, who led her away in all the tripping gallantry of a courtier of threescore ; while Lyderic attended them with that air of flaunting courtesy, which the followers of royalty seem to catch as naturally as the sunflower receives its gaudy bloom from the luminary towards which it so obsequiously turns. A carriage of the archduke's waited at the low portal by which the deputation had entered ; and Theresa, having passed shuddering through the scene of the late affray, which still showed its bloody marks, was handed into the vehicle by the old marquess, who placed himself at her side, and in a few minutes she was safely in his house.

In the mean time Van Rozenhoed and his

friends had reached their several prisons. While he was led down from the ante-chamber, where the useless struggle he had provoked had taken place, and just as he was about to step into his own carriage, in which he was permitted to be conducted to the Halle-gate, a man, from the crowd that had been attracted round the place of entrance to the palace, put his head close, and whispered in the burgomaster's ear—

“Fear nought—be bold and firm. The papers are all destroyed. Your friends watch over you and Theresa both.”

Van Rozenhoed turned round ; but the rapid movements of the crowd and the guards shifted the whole scenery of heads ; and the nearest face which met his view was that of one of the inquisitors, gloating in villainous triumph over these new victims.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

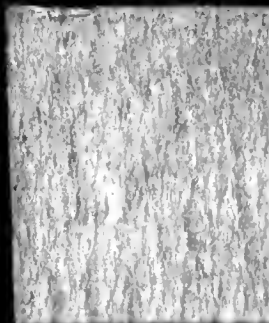
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